

SANTA CORPS  
written by BRYAN HUNT

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Candlelight sparkles off the baubles of a Christmas tree. All sorts of magical and festive decorations hang from the tree. They glint and shine in the golden light.

NARRATOR V.O.

Ah, the holidays! I still love this time of year! And I certainly know much more about it than the average person, for you see I used to be an integral part of it.

More of the tree is seen as our gaze rotates around it and moves up.

NARRATOR V.O.

(continues)

What's that? You know the holidays well yourself? Well, sure you do, but you see, I likely know it more as I was once one of the Santas. You heard me right. "Santas". Plural.

We reach the top of the tree to a gaudy and magnificent glittered star.

NARRATOR V.O.

(continues)

I will tell you of it. It's a widely kept secret, you know. "strictly hush-hush" as they say...but just this once...since you seem like the trustworthy sort...I will tell you five secrets of the Santa Corps.

EXT. ANCIENT RUSSIA. MOUNTAINS. DAY

A man with a long dark red coat and fur hat strides purposefully on a mountain trail. On his left hand is a metal artifact that looks much like brass knuckles except for the loop that extends above it. On his right hand is a long black glove. He turns suddenly, looking fiercely, extends his arm and shoots a beam of fire out of the loop on the artifact.

NARRATOR V.O.

(continues)

First secret. We were always wizards...

EXT. ANCIENT GREECE. A MEADOW. DAY.

Three wizards of various stature and gender shake hands vigorously with a group of elves in a meadow. The wizards all have red coats of different styles and each have the strange knuckle loop on one hand and long black glove on the other. The elves are roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  the size of a person, plump, with large pointy ears.

A storm brews in the background.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

We started back in a dark time - just 3 wizards and 7 elves.

Lightning strikes behind the group in the meadow. Elves and wizards both turn to face the lightning strike.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

For you see, there are only really two types of magic: light and dark.

EXT. FRANCE. MIDDLE AGES. PUBLIC HANGING. DAY

A woman is being led up to a hangman's noose. Her family looks on in the crowd. The noose is tightened. The floor drops out. She drops down.

As she drops, a clear Santa Corp wizard (red coat, spell loop, and black glove) rides up on a horse. He shoots a beam of fire at the rope and the woman drops down unharmed.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

With light, good deeds and good will can be collected and channeled to spin the planet on a more positive path.

The woman smiles. Her family cheers. White energy emanates off of both the woman and her family and rushes towards the black glove of the wizard, which he has held to the sky. His eyes flash as the energy collects. Then he rides off the direction he rode in on.

EXT. LONDON, ENGLAND. MIDDLE AGES. NIGHT.

A merchant runs a cart, selling bread. A woman and her two children walk up to the cart, clearly in need of food. She says something to the merchant and he looks as if he is about to give her a free loaf of bread.

10 feet behind the merchant, a man in a dark coat, oiled moustaches, and blue neck tie, reaches out his arm. His hand has a spell loop, like the Santa Corps wizards have, but the loop is below the knuckles, not above. From it shoots a dark misty ray that hits the merchant.

The merchant suddenly looks angry, shouts something at the woman, and she and her children walk away slowly, heads hung low.

A sickly green energy emanates from the merchant and collects on the blue necktie of the dark wizard.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

With dark, greed and selfishness and anger  
can be collected to do the reverse.

INT. TAVERN HALL. NIGHT

A Christmas tree, festively lit with candles and trinkets sits in a corner. Presents lay strewn about - some wrapped...and some unwrapped. A merry song is playing and folk dance around the hall festively.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

We started our collective to bring the earth  
out of a dark time. We figured that merry songs  
and getting unexpected gifts and seeing

brightness on the darkest of days would create  
a boon of light magic to help fuel the world  
back on a brighter track.

A boy grabs a present, and walks it up to a woman. He tugs her  
skirt. She turns. He hands her the present. Her smile beams.

NARRATOR V.O  
(slowly, confidently)  
We were right

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

A Christmas tree and garland decorate the room. A plate sits on  
a counter with several holiday shortbread cookies on it. A glass  
of milk nearby. A hand with a Santa Corps spell loop reaches out  
and takes a cookie

NARRATOR V.O  
(continues)  
Second secret. It was never about Christmas.  
I mean it was never religious in that way. It's  
a good pairing...like shortbreads and milk, but  
the two only coincided - they were never partners.

The hand then reaches out and takes the glass of milk for a  
drink.

INT. MAP ROOM. DAY

A large picture of a traditional Santa appears on the map.

NARRATOR V.O  
(continues)  
Third secret. It was never one fat man. One  
man could never deliver all those presents to  
all those houses in one night.

The picture is torn off the map. The map underneath was of a  
small village. Three red dots can be seen moving around the  
village.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

It's absurd. It started with three of us and  
a small village.

The map then shifts to a modern looking map of the world. There  
are countless red dots moving all over the globe.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

These days, there are tens of thousands of us

EXT. BLACKNESS

In the blackness, there is a pop noise and a pudgy fellow with a  
large white beard and hat is shown.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

Fourth Secret: We aren't all pudgy old men.

There is another pop and the man changes into a thin fellow with  
long hair.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

Some of us are thin.

Another pop and the thin fellow changes to a curvy lady

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

Some of are ladies.

Another pop and the figure changes to an androgynous individual  
with a rainbow mohawk

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

And some of us defy labels altogether.

INT. PRESENT DAY. CONFERENCE HALL. NIGHT.

Many people are seated at various tables around the hall. A good half are in red coats in one form or another. On the stage, there are 10-12 seats encircling the podium with people garbed in red in one form or another. Among them are MATTHIAS in a red leather trench coat and salt and pepper beard and BERGMANN, an elderly woman with her hair up and wearing a red velvet dress, and CLIFTON, a younger man wearing a puffy red vest. At the podium stands GERARD, a large man with a large white beard and a dark red corduroy suit jacket. He is the perfect picture of the Santa Claus everyone envisions.

NARRATOR V.O

(continues)

Fifth Secret. Yes, we get a greatly extended life being Santas... as do our families...but we aren't immortal. We eventually retire and live out our lives without the candy corn and reindeer. Which brings us to today...

Gerard lowers his spectacles to look at his notes. Then he nods to himself and pushes his glasses back in place with a finger.

GERARD

(Muttering)

Yes, yes. Down to it then.

(Clearer)

It was a fine year we had. One for the record books, really. Especially that funny business in Cleveland...you know what I am talking about Reynolds.

REYNOLDS

(shouting from audience)

Not my fault

Gerard motions for quiet

GERARD

Oh, of course. Where was I? Oh, right. I have been the Head Claus for 347 years as of this year. And while I have had a great time doing it, the Mrs. and I want to spend more time together,

and more time with the kids, the grand kids, the great grand kids, etc. Some \*great\* time. You know... Gerard stops, wiping a tear from his face

GERARD

(continuing)

Oh blast! This was a good year and a fine one to be my last. In the spirit of giving, as we all know and love, I am retiring and giving my post over to someone new and worthy.

Murmurs of shock and shouts of disappointment rock the auditorium.

GERARD

(continuing)

Look now, this was hardly a surprise. I was not really all that quiet about this departure. I am sure all of you knew about this through the rumour mill. Secrets and elves are not things that stick together you know.

Laughter erupts in the auditorium. One of the elves on the stage shrugs and then nods briskly in agreement.

GERARD

(continuing)

So now, it is the choosing. Let's just get this done. I will ask each candidate to stand and briefly say a few words as I introduce them. First is Matthias. He has been our Master of Gadgetry for nearly 70 years. I think you all know him.

MATTHIAS stands up, and bows.

MATTHIAS

(booming)

Were you to give me the honour of choosing me as Head Claus, know that I will push for more advancements in the tech to make all of your lives easier.

(winking)

Maybe even a jingle app for your phones to help with navigation.



There is strong clapping at that suggestion. Matthias bows again and sits back down.

GERARD

And Clifton, of course. He is second in command of the management of the naughty list.

(humms to himself)

He's maybe a bit unseasoned, but you have to admire him putting his candy cane on the pavement here.

CLIFTON stands and does a twirl.

CLIFTON

Look, I know I am a long shot here...but vote for me. Currently I can see you when you are sleeping...and if I were promoted, that wouldn't be a thing anymore.

Laughter erupts in the hall as Clifton smiles and sits back down.

GERARD

He would certainly be a mirthful Head Claus, to be sure. And finally, my second in command, your current first assistant Head Claus, Bergmann.

BERGMANN gracefully stands and walked to the center of the stage.

BERGMANN

I am not one for promises and such. Honestly, I am not sure change is what we need at all. I think we are doing amazing. At the top of our game.

Murmurs of agreement emanate from the audience.

BERGMANN

So on my watch, I will do much the same as our dear Gerard did during his run. After all, it has worked wonders...

The applause following this is loud. Bergmann turns to go back to her seat.

Then she swivels around again.

BERGMANN

And speaking of wonders...

She extends her right hand and shoots a ray of glitter out of her spell loop. It coalesces over the main hall into the shape of a Christmas tree. The tree sparkles in the air for a moment and then dissipates.

Bergmann nods briefly to the audience and returns to her chair.

GERARD

Well, that certainly was...umm...festive, was it not? Three solid candidates. Please use your voting devices and choose.

As the Santa's begin to vote, behind each candidate a bar is shown that represents their current votes. Clifton has a very small bar. Bergmann has a sizable bar. Matthias has a bar that is slightly bigger than Bergmann's. Another Santa elbows Matthias, motioning to his bar. Matthias turns around to notice it.

MATTHIAS

Oh. Well...that is surprising.

BERGMANN

(whispering)

You would make a great Head Claus. We all know it.

MATHIAS

(whispering)

As would you. May the best man win.

Bergmann nods.

GERARD  
(to audience)  
Our overseas votes are coming in now.

Bergmann's bar starts to lead out ahead of Matthias's. She is now in the lead.

GERARD  
And that about wraps it up. It looks like  
it is...Bergmann!

Everyone claps as Bergmann heads to the podium. Matthias claps hard and loud, despite the frown that is cast on his face.

Gerard deftly moves aside as Bergmann takes the podium.

BERGMANN  
Well, thanks for that, dear friends! And let's  
have a round of applause for Matthias and  
Clifton

Applause continues.

BERGMANN  
Well, eat hearty and drink until you think  
you can fly like a reindeer. Tomorrow it's  
back to work. I need lists for candidates,  
you know. We are down one Santa.

INT. SANTA CORPS HQ. HEAD CLAUS OFFICE. DAY.

Bergmann sits behind her large oaken desk. "Head Claus" is stamped on a placard on the desk. She is wearing trendy glasses and is busy on her laptop. Her office is a flurry of activity with people coming and going.

BERGMANN  
(to a random assistant)  
Did we get the stats for Bristol yet? Where  
are those numbers?

Gerard knocks on the office door and pokes his head in. He is freshly shaven.

GERARD

Do you have a moment?

BERGMANN

Sweet reindeer games, you look different. Of course.  
Come in. I always have  
time for my former boss.

Gerard rubs his naked chin.

GERARD

Yeah, I wanted a change, and this is as symbolic as it  
gets. Say, I know  
you have candidate lists for the vacancy I created,  
and I know it would  
be unorthodox for me to suggest one...but...

BERGMANN

(finishing his sentence)  
...but...you unorthodoxily have one to suggest?

Gerard hands her a tablet.

GERARD

Bingo. He's not one we would have found through  
regular channels...

Bergmann looks intently at the tablet.

BERGMANN

(sighing)  
A mail carrier...I don't know...Grady Boots...  
interesting name

GERARD

(interrupting)  
I know. I know. Look at the video though. My  
grand daughter sent it to me. It's as good as  
any application vid I have ever seen.

Bergmann clicks on the tablet.

EXT. GRADY BOOTS VIDEO. CITY. DAY.

The video starts with two teens skateboarding (and presumably a third taking a shaky phone cam video of the event).

In the background an ELDERLY WOMAN stands looking up at a tree. Mail carrier GRADY BOOTS walks her direction with his mail bag. The elderly woman notices him and flags him over.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh Grady! Grady! Seacrest is up in the tree again. Can you get him? You know...like last time.

GRADY

(laughing)

You bet, Meryl...I shouldn't though...I mean, don't name your cat after that guy.

He looks up the tree and the deftly starts climbing.

The teen filming notices Grady and turns to film the ascent.

TEEN FILMING O.S.

Whoa. That guys got...like...he's like a human squirrel or something

He is not wrong. Grady climbs the tree like a pro. The cat is not having it though, it moves higher as he climbs.

SKATEBOARDER O.S.

(pouty/angry)

You missed my kickflip!

TEEN FILMING O.S.

Shush!! Just stop. Mail dude is killing it.

Grady makes a jump from one branch to another and swings up on top. The cat jumps from the tree to a neighboring house.

He sighs, shrugs, then runs along the branch towards the house, dives through the air landing in a shoulder roll on the roof.

SKATEBOARDER O.S.  
(breathy)  
Dang!

Grady dusts himself off. The cat starts climbing up the roof. Grady disappears behind the other side of the roof and then pops out near the top as the cat reaches that very spot. He deftly scoops up 'Seacrest' and slowly makes his way to the edge of the roof.

SKATEBOARDER O.S.  
Can we get back to filming here?

TEEN FILMING O.S  
No dude. I don't think the awesome is finished yet.

Grady reaches the eaves and leans down and grabs the eavestrough with one hand while cradling 'Seacrest' in the other. Then he flips over frontwards, while holding the eavestrough, and lowers himself down to the ground.

The skating teen claps. Grady returns Seacrest to the elderly woman.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
Oh, thank you Grady! You make the world a better place.

GRADY  
I'm just happy to help.

Grady and the elderly woman (and the skateboarders) are frozen in place as the video pauses.

INT. SANTA CORPS HQ. HEAD CLAUS OFFICE. DAY.

BERGMANN  
(sarcastic)  
So...saves a cat...makes an old lady happy and impresses some teens. Is that Santa material?

Gerard holds a finger up.

GERARD

Watch again. And think on this. He carries his mail bag up the tree, parkours through the branches, scrambles up rooftops, and does a flip off of it. Do you know how many letters he lost?

Bergmann looks on questioningly.

GERARD

None. I have watched it seven times. Not one dropped. Plus he just wants to make the world a better place. So...Santa material?

BERGMANN

(nodding)

Santa material. I mean, as long as he has some wizarding in his blood too.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Bergmann sits opposite to Grady Boots at a fancy restaurant. Grady is dressed in a nice suit while Bergmann is wearing a fancy red dress with an elegant white fur hat. They are nibbling on appetizers.

Waiters zip to and fro in the background, going about their tasks.

GRADY

So you want me to believe you're Santa

BERGMANN

Well, a Santa. There are many of us

A waiter approaches the table

WAITER

(interrupting)

Have you decided on a wine, Miss?

BERGMANN

(to waiter, yet remains looking at Grady)  
The 72, if you don't mind  
(to Grady)  
I'm the head Claus actually.

The waiter winces

WAITER

Excellent choice

GRADY

And you are all magicians, you say?

BERGMANN

(waiving a finger)  
No, no! Wizards. Magicians do card tricks.  
Wizards manipulate energy.

Bergmann emphatically hits her hand on the table, hard enough  
that the plates rattle.

BERGMANN

(continuing)  
Wizards change the world!

GRADY

And you want me to be one?

BERGMANN

No. We want you to compete for the spot.

GRADY

And what makes you think I can be a Santa?

BERGMANN

Well, some people are just born as givers. Some  
are born also swift on their feet. Further to  
this, some of these are also able to bend  
magical energy to their will. These are wizards.  
These are Santa's. People are naturally drawn  
to them, and I do believe you have all those  
qualities, boy. So that is why I am inviting  
you to try.



GRADY  
(wiping his mouth)  
Well, ma'am. I do appreciate the offer. But  
I don't much believe in magic. And I  
definitely don't believe in Santa.

The waiter approaches the table again, with a bottle of wine.

WAITER  
Excuse me, ma'am. Is this insolent cur  
bothering you?

Bergmann waves him off.

BERGMANN  
It's quite alright. He is just having some  
doubts.

Grady turns to the waiter.

GRADY  
(sarcastically)  
Doubts? About Santa's and Wizards and elves  
and magic? Why would I have doubts? Tell me, sir  
waiter, do you feel magical today schlepping  
drinks in this fancy restaurant?

The waiter and Bergmann look at each other and laugh.

WAITER  
(raised eyebrow)  
Where do you think you are?

Grady looks back and forth between the two, confused.

BERGMANN  
Grady, do you remember how you got here? Do you  
even remember the name of this restaurant?

GRADY  
Sure...it's the...  
(beat)  
I mean, I came here after...

(sighing)  
I guess I don't.

The restaurant fades out of existence revealing that Bergmann and Grady were sitting at a card table in a bland concrete room. The waiter's visage and outfit dissipate to reveal Matthias. He has his spell loop on his right hand and a big black glove on the other.

Grady slumps down in his chair rubbing his chair rubbing his temples.

GRADY  
So this was you? Magic?

BERGMANN  
Magic, yes. Me, no. This illusion was all Matthias.

Matthias flicks his spell loop making it ding, and then bows.

GRADY  
So the Santa stuff...all real?

BERGMANN  
I am afraid so, my boy.

GRADY  
Where are we, then? North Pole?

MATTHIAS  
Don't be ludicrous. That's just a myth to throw people off the scent. Location is classified, though it's a long way from home.

GRADY  
How did I get here then?

Matthias and Bergmann look at each other.

INT. GRADY BOOTS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Grady is relaxing in his apartment, sitting on his couch watching TV.

Two plump elves pop out from another room and put candy cane striped blowguns to their mouths and blow hard into them. Projectiles fly and hit Grady in his neck and chest.

He immediately stands up and clutches his neck

GRADY  
(slurred)  
Hey! You can't...

The elves step back for a second.

Grady falls to his knees, his eyes rolling into the back of his head.

The elves nod to each other and bring a red sack over to him and pull it over his head onto his whole body. There is a slight crackling noise and the bag goes limp. They pick it up again. No Grady.

The elves pick up the sack and curtly nod to each other.

INT. CLAUS HEADQUARTERS. BLAND CONCRETE ROOM. DAY.

Grady rubs his neck where he was hit by the blow dart.

GRADY  
Well...ok then. So...what are the benefits.

BERGMANN  
Extra long lives for you and your loved ones.  
Being able to do magic. A pimped out ride.  
Gadgets. Elves. Free baked goods. And...well...  
doing some bloody good in this world!

GRADY  
I'm in.

BERGMANN

Splendid. You have a week to get your affairs in order. Training will begin promptly after that.

GRADY

How will I get there?

Matthias raises a bushy eyebrow.

GRADY

Seriously? No more elves with blow darts...

Bergmann and Matthias look at each other smirking.

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

Grady walks down the street in his mail carrier outfit carrying his bag full of mail and humming to himself.

A black stretch limousine speeds down the street and pulls up next to Grady stopping with a screech.

A door pops open.

GREEDLE O.S.

Get in.

GRADY

Hard pass, man. The whole 'Get in' thing is sketchy as all get out. I have seen too many movies for that.

GREEDLE O.S.

Fine. I like the hard way better.

A bolt of black/purple energy shoots out of the open door and envelopes Grady in a black/purple field. Grady struggles, but the field just warps around him and levitates him in the air. It pulls him towards the car and bangs him into the car twice before getting his entire body through the limo door.

INT. GREEDLE LIMO. DAY.

Inside the limo Grady is pushed towards one seat. He is still enveloped in the black/purple energy field being maintained by a beam of black/purple energy.

In the opposing seat is the source of that beam. He is a GREEDLE. Slick business type with a blue tie, short hair, and three-piece black suit. He is wearing sunglasses and on his right hand is a spell loop that extends below the palm of his hand. From this spell loop, the beam of purple/black energy is projected.

GREEDLE

You going to behave? If not, let me know.  
Because this is kind of fun for me.

Grady nods within the energy field.

The Greedle ends his spell and drops his right hand. Grady breaths heavily and dusts himself off, righting himself in the seat.

As the spell ends, green energy wafts off of Grady and collects on the Greedle's blue neck tie. The Greedle inhales quickly and smiles as if he had a hit of drugs

GREEDLE

All that anger...mmmm....Super fly, man.

GRADY

Did you have to smash me into the car?

GREEDLE

(smiling)

Nope.

The Greedle takes off his sunglasses and leans towards Grady.

GREEDLE

You know, I don't get you man. I've read your file. Top of your class. Marks that could have gotten you in anywhere especially with all of that affirmative action bullshit. You could

have been a captain of industry, like yours  
truly. But what do you do? You deliver the mail.  
(leaning back)  
It's a trip.

GRADY  
No, you don't get me. I am better with that  
fact the more we talk.

GREEDLE  
(fake laughing)  
Good one.  
(beat)  
Anyways, here is the vision, pal-io. I say  
to myself, here is a guy who has the skills  
and smarts to go places. He's a mover and shaker.  
He's gotten the pitch from the other team, but the  
other team is full of losers. This is a guy that  
will likely see a better offer and go for it.

GRADY  
And your offer is?

The Greedle makes the 'finger guns' gesture.

GREEDLE  
Right to brass tacks, I like it. Similar. Wield  
the magic for us. Long life. A ride like this.  
Score some serious bank. I mean why worry about  
a 401k when you make more than that yearly.  
Right, my man?

GRADY  
The other team, they seem about making the  
world better. What's your angle.

GREEDLE  
(smarmy)  
Better? Well, trinkets and baubles surely make  
people smile. It's a fools game and makes people  
dependant. They need the Santa's to give them  
these things. Us, on the other hand...we are making  
the world more independent. We show people how to  
capitalize on the moment. Greed will get them ways

to buy their own trinkets and baubles. Taking is always more effective than giving. Plus...with us...no team...no rules...you can work as a free agent. What do you say, can I start you out at around 200k?

Grady smiles and leans in. He motions for the Greedle to do the same.

The Greedle leans in.

GRADY  
(whispering)  
As you said. You really don't get me.

Grady reaches up viper quick and grabs the Greedles blue neck tie with one hand. The Greedle raises his right hand to cast and Grady catches that so that it isn't aimed at him.

They struggle. Green energy leaves Grady and collects in the tie. Smoke comes out from where he grabs the tie. Clearly it is burning Grady to grab it. He grimaces.

GREEDLE  
(out of breath)  
You're an idiot. Your fear only strengthens me.

GRADY  
Boy. You've only got one move. I don't care how strong you are if I am blocking it.

The Greedle yells and shoots out a bolt of blue/black energy anyway.

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

The limo speeds down the street. The roof suddenly explodes off of it as the bolt of blue/black energy shoots skyward.

The roof falls down to the other side of the street causing a car to swerve and crash.

The limo swerves abruptly to avoid the crash.

INT. GREEDLE LIMO. DAY.

As the limo swerves Grady and the Greedle are tossed to the right. They struggle after hitting the side of the car, the bolt of energy shooting wildly as the Greedles arm changes direction.

Grady slowly overpowers the Greedle and bends the Greedles arm towards himself. As the beam edges closer to hitting the Greedle, it stops and the Greedles eyes go wide. Grady's hand is still smoking where he grabbed the neck tie.

Grady then slams the Greedles arm against the window until his hand opens and uses that opportunity to pull off the spell loop

GREEDLE

Ok! Ok! I give.

Grady slips the spell loop onto his left hand, lets go of the neck tie and sits back in his chair.

GRADY

An idiot, am I? I have your magicky thing now!

Grady raises his left arm pointing the spell loop at the Greedle

GREEDLE

Yeah, you win. I get it. Except...

The Greedle leers at the spell loop.

GRADY

(angry)

Except what??

GREEDLE

You have that on wrong. You might blow us all up. Can I just show you how to properly wear it?

The Greedle raises out of his seat and starts towards Grady. Grady rises as well and faces the Greedle, still pointing the spell loop at him.



GRADY  
Just stay back!

The Greedle raises his hands in surrender, then lifts his leg and kicks Grady right in the chest, booting him out of the car.

GREEDLE  
(sarcastic)  
I'm afraid we will have to let you go.

The greedle laughs at his own joke

GREEDLE  
(to his chauffeur)  
Take me somewhere with scotch, stat.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

Grady flies out of the car and lands directly on an old mattress on the side of the street. Dust flies up as he lands.

Behind him on a bus bench is a short plump person wearing a toque and sunglasses. In reality, this is an elf - PEPPERJELLY SNELLS. Pepperjelly is reading a newspaper, but as Grady lands, he folds a corner of it down to watch him.

Grady coughs and dusts himself off. He looks at the mattress and then at Pepperjelly on the bench.

GRADY  
(mostly to himself)  
Man, what are the chances?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Chances? Of What?

GRADY  
I mean, did you see that?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Sure. I mean yes. I mean mostly. I was busy looking at stock tips or whatever normal people do with newspapers.

GRADY  
(slowly)  
So....

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Well, there were many chancy things there.  
Are you meaning what are the chances that a  
limo with the roof blown out of it would drive  
so poorly down this street? Or what are the  
chances of some weasel in a bad suit kicking you  
out of a moving vehicle? Or what are the chances  
that there would be a soft and amazing mattress  
for you to land on? Or what are the chances that  
you would have such a great form when landing on  
said mattress...I've seen better, by the way...so  
I hope you don't choose the last one.

Grady blinks while considering all these options.

GRADY  
(emphatically)  
All of that! All of that! But if I had to  
pick: the mattress thing.

Pepperjelly slowly slides his sunglasses down to look at Grady  
better and then back up.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Dude. That is absolutely the least chancy of  
those things. You are thinking that it was  
surely \*magic\* that this mattress would appear  
for you in your time of need?

GRADY  
Well...yeah.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
But perhaps you believe in magic now, right?  
I mean, let's say that you were applying for a  
job at a magic place and that maybe that  
organization may want to protect their  
investment in those that are applying.

Grady furrows his brows in thought.

GRADY

You seem to know a lot about my situation....how...

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(interrupting)

Sweet spearmint snowflakes, man! Know a lot?

Are you not getting it?

Pepperjelly quickly removes his hat and his pointy ears spring upwards.

GRADY

Ah! Bergmann sent you.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(sarcastically)

2 points.

GRADY

You're an elf!

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Can't slip anything by that steel trap, can we? Yes I am an elf.

Pepperjelly quickly looks left and right and puts his toque on again.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(continuing)

We aren't bows and arrows and wistful gazes like those fops in the movies. We are much, much better. We are legends at crafting and crafting wicked fast. Magic, you might say. Brilliant, you might say.

GRADY

Wait, you guys knew these jerks might try to grab me?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

We knew it was a possibility

Grady looks back towards the mattress. It is dusty and stained and misshapen.

GRADY

You made this?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(proudly)

Yup.

GRADY

I mean, thanks, I guess. But brilliant? Look at that thing? I feel like I might need to shower and get a tetanus shot after landing on that.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(winking)

I hear you say thanks. The rest of that was like buzzy noises that smelled like ungratefulness. Could be your shampoo though. Tough to say.

Grady blinks, staring at him.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

You could have died. This hasty magic mattress, while not my best work, is a pretty good alternative. One might even say it's...

Pepperjelly leers at Grady.

GRADY

(sighing)

Brilliant.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Yup. Brilliant. Now if you'll excuse me.

Pepperjelly raises his newspaper to read again.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The Santa Corps training gymnasium is a large facility with fake rooftops and streets in a giant aircraft hanger. At one end is a section of bleachers. Grady Boots sits in the bleachers along with the other recruits. There are about 20 of them. Among them are recruits LORI and SANTIAGO.

LORI

Lori Burns, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Claus, from Niagra region.

There are ooh's through the recruits.

SANTIAGO

Not bad. Impressive even. Santiago Lopez, 7<sup>th</sup> generation Claus going back to Spain, Brazil, and New Mexico. My lineage includes assistant Claus's, Gadget masters, and Naughty list admins.

Lori whistles to herself.

LORI

A ringer then, eh? We'll see.

SANTIAGO

Maybe, maybe...but I bet everyone here has some Claus in their heritage, right?

Grady raises his hand

GRADY

Mail carrier actually. Name is Grady.

LORI

Awesome, finally someone from the Wish Train Deliverers

GRADY

The what? Nah ...US Postal Service

The recruits groan and gasp in shock.

SANTIAGO

(sarcastically)

Respect... respect... Lot's of wizard blood in the

old Postal Service  
(chuckling)  
I think I'll just call you 'Failure to Deliver'

Laughter erupts within the recruits.

BERGMANN crosses the floor with an entourage of elves, MATTHIAS,  
and MERRYWEATHER.

BERGMANN  
Mr. Lopez, I believe the first Claus of your  
family was a chimney sweep before joining up.  
Isn't that right?

SANTIAGO  
Yah, but he was...

BERGMANN  
(finishing his sentence)  
..of humble origins. Well to remember that those  
who rest on the deeds of their ancestors are  
destined to wallow in the realms of mediocrity.  
Grady Boots is with us here as he has displayed  
skills, just as the rest of you have.

SANTAGO  
(crestfallen)  
Yes, ma'am.

BERGMANN  
Alright, I will leave you in the capable hands  
of Merryweather, our head instructor. Good luck  
to you all.

Bergmann walks back the way she came.

Merryweather steps forward. She is on the shorter side, but her  
commanding presence shines through regardless. She wears a red  
vest (instead of a traditional jacket) and a hard hat.

MERRYWEATHER  
Ok, we all know why we are here, yes? We have  
one opening for a new Claus, and 22 of you. Which  
means....for 21 of you, we will only see you...when

you are sleeping.

Several recruits laugh.

MERRYWEATHER

So who is ready to get Jolly!

The recruits murmur quietly.

MERRYWEATHER

Hmm. I guess maybe 22 of you will go home and kids in the open district will just have to go without presents this year. Or we could try this again.

GRADY

(blurting out)

I'm ready to get Jolly!

Merryweather turns in surprise. The rest of the recruits just look at him.

GRADY

Oh, I thought that was one of those moments when we all.....you know...at the same time...

MERRYWEATHER

Well, you may have jumped the gun there a little, but I really do like your spirit. Can I assume we all want to be Jolly then?

ALL OTHER RECRUITS

(Military Style)

Ready to be Jolly, Sir!

MERRYWEATHER

(beaming)

Holiday spirit bustin' out all over! I like it.

(more serious)

Ok, well, I will let you each get acquainted with your Spirit Liason Officer before we begin...

Grady raises his hand.

GRADY  
(interrupting)  
I'm sorry, my what?

MATTHIAS  
Right. The new guy. Always questions, questions, questions with the new folk. Your Spirit Liason Officer, or 'SLO' is your partner elf that will assist you with deliveries, list lookups, and pretty much anything else you require. Got that?

GRADY  
(nodding)  
You bet.

MERRYWEATHER  
As I was saying. Get acquainted and then we will start in on gruelling work we have ahead.

The recruits nod and murmur in ascent as the elves start to mingle with them. Grady looks around for his assigned S.L.O. as the others begin to see theirs.

Santiago does a quick, and obvious, secret handshake with his elf

SANTIAGO  
Snaps Wintergreen, my man!

Lori gives hers a quick hug. Grady continues to scan the room as the elves pair up. The only elf left is Pepperjelly Snells

GRADY  
Nah...nah...nah...say it isn't so.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
(high mocking tone)  
Human noise, Human noise, buzz, buzz, buzz,  
"I'm super excited to work with you  
Pepperjelly!"  
(normal voice)  
That's kind of what I am taking from this. Am I wrong?



GRADY

(sarcastically)

Of definitely. I mean lots of little boys  
and girls will want soiled mattresses for  
Christmas. Or maybe you can conjure a dirty  
dishcloth or two. Your name is really  
'Pepperjelly'?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Look round ears, I am the mother fudging  
Rembrant of conjure. Your mail-carrying posterior  
should just be grateful to pair with someone  
of my calibre. And yes, it's Pepperjelly.  
Pepperjelly Snells of the Philidelphia Snells.

GRADY

Philidelphia Snells?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

You may not know us. People know us though.  
We're a pretty big thing.

Grady blinks

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Look. Can we put away our insult guns?

Pepperjelly mimics putting guns back in imaginary holsters

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(continuing)

And just shake hands here instead? Because  
that's a high noon that this Snell will  
dominate anyway.

Grady nods and extends a hand. Pepperjelly extends his hand as  
well. Before they touch, there is a poof of magic and a dirty  
dishcloth is in Pepperjelly's hand. He presses it into Grady's  
hand and shakes vigorously.

Grady drops the handshake immediately.

GRADY

Dude! Really?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Dirty Dishcloth! Boom!

Pepperjelly mimics pulling his imaginary guns back out and blows the imaginary smoke from the barrels. He then whistles the theme of 'The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly' to himself...followed by 'Wah, wah, wah'.

GRADY

(to Merryweather)

Can I get a new elf? Mine's broken!

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

MERRYWEATHER

Ok, we will start with basic motion. You have to learn to move like a Claus. Baby steps people. Jackets and belts, please.

There are groans from the recruits, but they begin putting on red jackets and belts. All of them seem to have their own jackets prepared. They are all different styles and shapes, but they look new and shiny.

GRADY

I don't seem to have...

Pepperjelly holds up a ratty looking red jacket and a faded belt with a distinctive black buckle. This buckle does look the same as the one on the other recruits suits.

PEPPERJELLY

I got these from the spares in the trainee changeroom for you.

Grady begins to put them on.

MERRYWEATHER

Alright, give your buckles a quarter turn and your Holo-Sant will start emitting.

Recruits start twisting their belt buckles and they all 'pop' into looking very much the same. It's the standard Santa look - older, beard, white, chubby, rosy cheeks.

GRADY

Question. Do I really need to look like a chubby old white dude?

MERRYWEATHER

Well, Mr. Boots, you can take it up with our new Head Claus. Our image of Santa is standardized so that any accidental viewings come across the same...but alterations to happen over the years. The suits used to be 'Old Man winter' blue, if you can believe it. But I highly doubt Bergmann will issue a change this year...so just give it a quarter twist, recruit.

Grady twists his buckle. He pops into looking just like the others, but his image flickers on and off.

GRADY

(to himself)

Man....

MATTHIAS

I will get you a new one, recruit. For now, give it a smack to see if it fixes it.

Grady smacks his buckle and the image smooths out.

MATTHIAS

That's better.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok recruits, please walk forward 10 paces as you think a Claus should.

The recruits walk forward at various speeds, but it looks too smooth.

MERRYWEATHER

Horrible. Just horrible. Did that look like

your belly was like a bowl full of jelly?

SANTIAGO

(laughing to himself)

How are we supposed to do that? Eat a big meal?

MERRYWEATHER

(sarcastically)

So funny Mr. 7<sup>th</sup> generation Claus.

(more serious, quieter voice)

It's quite simple really. With every action,  
you must move like you are a whole lot jollier.  
So, when walking, you need to move up and down  
more like you had a big belly.

(drill instructor voice)

Ok. From the top.

The recruits return to their starting area and walk again. It looks more believable, but their 'jolly-walk' renditions are all over the place.

MERRYWEATHER

Not bad. Not bad. Santiago, more bounce.

Boots, less. Gimble, I have no idea why you  
are swaying left to right as well...you ever see  
a plus sized person sway like that? Ok...back to  
your positions. One more time, then we hit the  
rooftops.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

The one corner of the gymnasium is filled with roof tops. Not houses, just rooftop after roof top of different sorts. The recruits are lined up on one side of this with Merryweather standing precariously on a close rooftop.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok, we do three heats. It's just a race  
across the roof tops. If you don't jolly walk,  
you are disqualified. Slowest two overall  
times will be cut. It's that simple.

Merryweather blows her whistle. Most recruits start out at that point. It takes Grady by surprise and he takes a moment before starting. Some are moving too fast.

MERRYWEATHER

Less hustle, more jolly Cranston, or I will vote your butt out of the running.

Cranston slows down. Moving jolly over the rooftops is more treacherous than it looks. Many recruits fall as they go from rooftop to rooftop, costing precious time.

Grady catches up and as he does so he is sideswiped by Santiago. Grady goes down. He rubs his jaw.

GRADY

Coach? Foul play here?

MERRYWEATHER

All is fair here, Mr. Boots. Stopping to whine about it costs you time. Tick tock!

Grady hustles to his feet. He reaches the end not first, but not last either. Everyone stands panting and catching their breath at the other end.

GRADY

(to Santiago)

You gotta play like that?

SANTIAGO

I wanted to see if you would be lost in the mail.

GRADY

(sarcastic)

Funny. Funny. I am on to you now, though.

SANTIAGO

Bring it.

Pepperjelly approaches Grady with a towel for Grady to wipe himself off.

PEPPERJELLY

(defensive)  
Its clean this time. It's clean.

Grady grabs it and wipes the sweat from his face.

GRADY  
Any tips for me here?

PEPPERJELLY  
Try not to get hit next time. Maybe some  
lunges to warm up or something?

Grady blinks.

GRADY  
(sarcastically)  
You are a veritable font of wisdom.

Pepperjelly smiles and nods to himself.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

Round 2. Recruits are jolly walking/running across the rooftops.  
Grady is making good progress, when Lori cuts him off.

LORI  
Oopsies!

Grady veers into a chimney stack and topples over.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

Round 3. Grady is near leading the pack when Santiago comes from the side. He spots Santiago approaching in his periphery and stops suddenly (yet jolly like) as Santiago attempts to hip check him out of the way. Instead, Santiago tumbles to the ground, missing Grady entirely. He skids along the rooftop on his face.

GRADY  
7<sup>th</sup> Generation face plant.

Grady deftly steps over Santiago and jolly runs away. He finishes first.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

The recruits are lined up. Merryweather stands in front of them looking at her clipboard.

MERRYWEATHER

Its not personal, it's just math people.  
Crestwell, Zalonski, you are cut. You can  
spread holiday cheer, but it won't be here.  
Thanks for playing.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING FACILITY. REC HALL. DAY

The recruits lounge around tables. On the walls are paintings of  
Clauses of the past doing magic and heroic deeds.

RECRUIT ELLINGTON

Does anyone know why we are here and not  
training more? Are more of us being cut?

SANTIAGO

Probably you, Ellington. And ...  
(pointing to Grady)  
He voted most likely to go postal.

Head Claus Bergmann enters the rec hall with several assistants.  
Santiago promptly shuts up.

BERGMANN

Why you are here, you ask? Well, since there  
are those new to the organization, and those  
that may not have seen this before, I thought  
I would show you the very reason that we do  
what we do.

LORI

Don't we do what we do to bring joy to people  
all over the world?

BERGMANN

Yes and no. Just watch.

Bergmann raises her right-hand with her spell loop facing up and a pink mist emerges from it. In the centre of the room an image forms from the pink mist of a giant white spindle slowly spinning in a cavern of ice.

BERGMANN

(continuing)

This, my potential Clauses , is the world light axis. Our entire job is to feed the light axis with positive energy - that we have collected with joy, happy surprises, belief, and cheer to keep it spinning and glowing. You see, the more potent the light axis is, the more positive and healthy the world will be. Our goal is to consistently put the world on a brighter path.

Grady raises his hand.

BERGMANN

Yes, Grady?

GRADY

How do we feed it positive energy, exactly?  
I mean we are just delivering gifts, right?

BERGMANN

Good question.

Bergmann raises her left hand which has a delicate black glove.

BERGMANN

(continuing)

You see this black glove? Every clause will have one. It will collect positive energy and send it directly to the axis. And every Clause-given gift has a collector embedded as well, so that when opened on Christmas day, all that joy and happiness will channel into the spindle.

Bergmann raises her right hand.



BERGMANN

(continuing)

Every Claus will also have a spell loop like this. It channels energy directly from the light axis which we can utilize for our work. Remember that we are wizards. We don't have magic, we \*shape\* magic. In our case, the magic comes from the light axis.

RECRUIT ELLINGTON

And what happens if we use more magical energy than we collect?

BERGMANN

Well. In that case, the light axis will diminish. We must always be careful to not let that happen.

The recruits nod to themselves.

SANTIAGO

Are you going to tell them about the world dark axis as well?

Bergmann shoots him a look.

BERGMANN

We must walk before we run, right? So not just yet. All in good time.

GRADY

When do we get a fancy loop and glove to try out?

BERGMANN

You must be a prophet Mr. Boots. Back to training with you all!

The recruits groan collectively.

Bergmann lowers her right hand and the image of the light axis winks out of existence.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. PADDED AREA. DAY

The recruits stand in a padded area of the training gymnasium with their spirit liaison officer elves with them. Opposite the recruits is Matthias, Merryweather, and behind her, a choir.

Matthias is handing out black gloves to each recruit.

Santiago holds up his left hand with a black glove already on it.

SANTIAGO

No need, I have my own.

MATTHIAS

That you do. But these are different. They are trainers. They are all tied to a training axis. That way if you wee claus-lettes drain the axis, you aren't affecting the world light axis in any way. Make sense?

Santiago nods and takes a black glove from Matthias.

Grady takes his black glove as it is handed to him. He inspects it and puts it on. Matthias moves on to supplying the other recruits.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(to Grady)

Make sure the metal bits in the glove are lined up with the creases on the bottom of your knuckles. That makes for best saturation.

GRADY

(whispering)

Saturation

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Like the best energy collection. Think of it like drinking a tall glass of juice. You want to drink it in such a way that none of the juice dribbles down your face. Or maybe you like it like that.

(blinks)

Yeah, you seem like the sort that likes it  
when the juice is on his chin.

All of the recruits have their gloves on at this point. Their  
spirit liaison officers are helping them adjust them.

MERRYWEATHER

Alright! So here is what is going to happen.  
The choir will sing and the joy from them  
will collect in your gloves. There will be  
three rounds. Those that collect the most  
will stay in the game. Understood?

The recruits nod.

MERRYWEATHER

Aaand...begin

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Best to lean into it the first time. You  
seem like the frail sort.

The choir begins to sing "jingle bells". Yellow energy floats  
off the choir members, and from those enjoying it (Merryweather  
especially) towards the recruits.

Grady turns to Pepperjelly, tensing his gloved hand into a fist  
(but not threatening with it)

GRADY

Frail?

The yellow energy collects on Grady's glove and it sends him  
flying backwards.

The other recruits are straining, but clearly collecting energy.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(raising his voice)

Yup. Frail. But in a relatable way, you know?

MERRYWEATHER

Mr. Boots has demonstrated the first lesson  
of the glove. A closed fist will jolt you more

than an open hand. Relax your hands to better receive the energy.

(to Grady)

Get up. Keep trying. You are behind. You don't want to stay there.

Grady stands and opens his gloved hand, collecting the yellow energy.

Pepperjelly uses his hands to gesture a 'leaning in pose'

GRADY

(gritting his teeth)

I...Am....Leaning

MERRYWEATHER

Relax recruits. This is joyful music. The more you resist the energy collection, the more difficult it is to collect. Its not a fight. It's a surrender.

The choir finishes up.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok...and that's round one. Caulder, Boots...you are in the bottom. Not enough energy collected between the two of you to light an LED Christmas light. Lori, you are the top this round.

Grady leans over to Lori.

GRADY

(whispering)

What's your secret?

LORI

I think of myself like a sunflower.

GRADY

(whispering)

A sunflower?

LORI

Yeah. A sunflower doesn't fight the sun on it. It turns towards the sun and just accepts all it can. It just smiles at the warm goodness on it's face.

GRADY

(laughing)

All right.

The choir starts playing 'sleigh ride'

MERRYWEATHER

Again!

Grady rubs his hands together, then closes his eyes.

GRADY

(to himself)

Sunflower. Sunflower. Sunflower.

The yellow energy hits him this time and he smiles as it does. Lori looks over and smiles at him.

MERRYWEATHER

Much better, Mr. Boots.

Santiago looks to be doing not so bad, but is clearly straining more than Lori or Grady.

SANTIAGO

(desperate)

What sort of flower? Daisy? Dandelion? Help a fella out, will you?

MERRYWEATHER

Your meter is dipping, Santiago. All that chatty-chatty, me thinks.

Santiago opens his mouth to talk again, but stops, nodding. Grady simply smiles in return.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. PADDED AREA. DAY

The recruits line up, sweating after the energy collection.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok. Mr. Boots, you really pulled that out of the fire after your initial misfortune. 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Lori, you were top collector. Caulder, Miranda, unfortunately you were at the bottom of the heap. You are cut. Unfortunately the santas don't mingle with your style of jingle. Thanks for playing.

Miranda just picks her towel up and strides away, wiping away tears.

Caulder's spirit liason elf shoves him in frustration.

CAULDERS ELF

I told you! No closed fists!

CAUDLER

Stanky Stocking Coal! Get off me man!

MERRYWEATHER

Take it outside, boys

Caulder and his elf walk away, arguing with each other.

Pepperjelly Snells approaches Grady.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(quietly)

Don't feel bad about second place.

GRADY

I mean, I don't.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Oh. Ok. A lesser dude might though. But second is good. Like everyone wants to tear down the first-place guy. Like 'Let's up-smack him with a fruit cake and kick him in the gum drops'...that sort of thing.

GRADY

You're dark, man.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Dark. Dark is fine. Dark chocolate. Fine. Dark Coffee. Fine. Pepperjelly Snells' quality sensibilities? Fine. But back to the point see, second place...no one says that about the second place Hombre. You get me? World of difference.

GRADY

I'm sorry. Aren't we in it to win this thing?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Right skippy, my lanky friend! But there is an art to winning. Stay in second place...or even third...and then at the last moment, pull a Rudolf.

GRADY

A Rudolf?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Yeah, shift into overdrive, tell Roxanne to throw on that red light and pull into the lead. Then everyone yells out 'Won't you drive my Sleigh tonight!' And the crowd goes wild for Pepperjelly Snells...

Pepperjelly makes an extended applause noise

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Oh, and for you too, of course.

GRADY

(sighing)

So weird.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Your pronunciation of 'awesome' is a bit off. It should come from here.

Pepperjelly pokes Grady in the stomach.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Your diaphragm. Try it again.

Grady blinks and looks right at Pepperjelly.

GRADY  
Weird.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
That was not even a third place level attempt.  
I mean if I was giving out awards... and I am...

He places a hand on Grady's chest and there is a bit of a poof  
and a metal award is pinned to Grady.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Yours would be a dumb metal...like tin.

INT. SANTA CORPS DINING AREA. DAY.

The remaining recruits each stand in front of a long table. The  
table is filled with a near endless line of plates of cookies  
and glasses of milk.

MERRYWEATHER  
For a change of pace, we are going to test  
how well you can pack back milk and cookies.  
This is an integral part of the Santa  
experience.

Grady looks at all the cookies on his table and sighs. He raises  
his hand.

GRADY  
Question. I can barely eat 5 cookies in a  
row on the best of days. How am I supposed to  
finish all of these?

The other recruits laugh.

MERRYWEATHER  
I am not going to give you all the answers,  
Grady Boots. You will just have to figure it



out. Either that or you wash down defeat with a big old glass of milk.

Pepperjelly tugs at his sleeve. Grady turns to look at his S.L.O.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(whispering)

I put a transportal in your jacket pocket. It goes directly to me. As in if you dump a cookie in there, it will end up in my grateful hands. Make sure you eat at least some cookies on each plate...or make it look like you are eating them...

GRADY

(whispering to Pepperjelly)

Isn't that cheating?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Did Merryweather say there was a rule that you had to be the one that ate all of the cookies specifically?

Grady stops for a moment and shakes his head no.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Besides, look around. Everyone else will be doing this. This is one of those rules that is a bit bendy. The sugar is what powers us elves, anyway. It's expected.

Grady looks around. Santiago is high fiving Snaps Wintergreen. Lori and her elf nod to one another.

GRADY

Ok. Any other tips?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Uh...ya. You don't need to eat every cookie and drink every drop. Leaving crumbs and a bit of milk leftover is traditional. Also, send every ginger snap your way. They are a super food. I gotta work on my beach bod.

Pepperjelly smacks his belly and sets it to jiggling, then poses, flexing his non-existent biceps.

GRADY

I am pretty certain that's wrong.

Pepperjelly shrugs

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Are you an elf? Do you know how our physiology works?

GRADY

No. But...

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Then send them snaps my way, yo! Super food for the win!

MERRYWEATHER

(interrupting)

Ok, claus-lings...on 3, we go. And like always, the two that finish last are out. No pressure. And by no pressure, I mean, of course, lot's Of pressure.

Grady and Pepperjelly run to their positions.

MERRYWEATHER

1 - 2 - 3 ...go!

The recruits shoot forward with gusto. Everyone's stuffs their face with cookies at the first plate and downs their first glass of milk, though most of the milk runs down their faces. A few cookies get slipped into pockets creating quiet crackling-zap noises as they go through the pocket transportals. At the far side of the room, elves have cookies fall into their hands and they gobble them up without hesitation. Grady is making good strides. He is not in the lead, but only Santiago and Lori are ahead of him. He saves time by picking up each plate, nibbling a cookie and dumping the rest in his pocket.

Santiago reaches the end of his table first and Merryweather blows a whistle, finishing the competition. The rest of the

recruits look up at the sound of the whistle, crumbs dot their faces and clothes and their jackets are wet with milk. The recruit farthest behind stomps her foot in anger.

MERRYWEATHER

Two more of you down the drain. What can I say, it's crumby luck!

(pointing to Grady)

You figured out the trick. Lucky for you!

(to the rest of the recruits)

Ok. That's it for training today. Tomorrow we will send you into the field to test your skills. You will need a type 32 standard sleigh for this.

Grady wipes himself clean with a towel and walks over to Merryweather.

GRADY

Hey, I don't have a sleigh, type 32 or otherwise.

MERRYWEATHER

Of course you don't. You aren't a legacy recruit like the rest here. Go see our gadgets master, Matthias. He will hook you up with one.

INT. SANTA CORPS GADGET LAB. DAY.

Grady enters the gadget lab. He looks around in wonder. In the background is an elf firing a machine gun into what appears to be a giant peppermint candy, two other elves testing some sort of rocket booster, and other Claus employees sending items through a giant transportal. Close to Grady, an elf tinkers with a piece of electronics.

GRADY

I'm looking for Matthias...

The elf doesn't even look up but points to a glass enclosed office in the middle of the lab.

INT. SANTA CORPS GADGET LAB. MATTHIAS'S OFFICE. DAY

Grady knocks quickly and then enters Matthias's office.

Matthias has a bunch of spell loops which are arrayed on a tray submersed in green liquid with electrodes attached to them. The electrodes are connected to a cylindrical electrical device.

As Grady enters, Matthias quickly disconnects the electrodes.

GRADY

Hi...Matthias...?

Matthias turns and smiles

MATTHIAS

You got me.

Grady looks at the spell loops.

GRADY

Are those new spell loops?

MATTHIAS

Yes. I am working on some ....upgrades...

(whispering to himself)

You could call it that...

Grady looks at the device he has set up.

MATTHIAS

You didn't come here to ask that though, right?

GRADY

What? Oh. No. I need a type 32 standard sleigh for some field exercise.

Matthias rolls his eyes.

MATTHIAS

Riiight...Merryweathers big gambit. No, I guess you wouldn't have one, being new and all. You know, I started out like you, you know. I wasn't

a legacy.

Matthias roots through his cabinets.

MATTHIAS

(to himself)

Type 32. Type 32. Ah, here we go.

Matthias pulls out a small translucent glowing purple cube and then stands.

MATTHIAS

Let's go test it out.

INT. SANTA CORPS GADGET LAB. TESTING AREA. DAY

The testing area is a wide-open room with metal walls.

MATTHIAS

It's really quite simple. You just hold the cube, then think of your favorite vehicle, and throw it down, saying 'Dancer'

Matthias throws the cube down.

MATTHIAS

Dancer!

The cube morphs into a red Ferrari right beside him.

MATTHIAS

Then you say...well...you will see...to recall it. Prancer!

As he says 'Prancer', the Ferrari morphs back into a glowing purple cube and flies up to his hand. Matthias then tossed the cube to Grady, who deftly catches it.

MATTHIAS

Your turn.

Grady closes his eyes, pensive, then throws the cube down.

GRADY

Dancer!

The cube turns into a red coloured postal service van.

MATTHIAS

Well. That is surprising. Maybe try again.

Grady nods.

GRADY

Prancer!

The van morphs into a cube and it flies up to his hand. He closes his eyes, then re throws it down.

GRADY

Dancer!

This time it morphs into a red rusted out Ford Tempo.

MATTHIAS

Hmm. Better, I suppose.

GRADY

Prancer!

The cube flies up to his hand.

Matthias claps his hands together to break the tension.

MATTHIAS

Well! It just takes some practice.

Matthias puts his hand on Grady's shoulder.

MATTHIAS

I am sure it will turn out fine. You should know that I am rooting for you. It is hard to be a non-legacy in this environment. I know it well. You feel unappreciated and disrespected, I bet.

GRADY  
(laughing)  
Yeah, a tiny bit.

MATTHIAS  
I figured. Now, if it doesn't work out, know  
that there are other options for you. You  
have skill, boy, and there is no sense wasting  
that.

Grady squints in thought.

GRADY  
What do you mean?

Matthias pauses.

MATTHIAS  
Well, there are plenty of jobs in the service  
that are not Santa specific. Look around in  
my lab. Lots of guys working here just like you.

Grady nods. He holds up the cube again.

GRADY  
Thanks for this.

MATTHIAS  
Of course. Just bring it back in one piece.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The remaining recruits stand around the gym talking with each  
other and their S.L.O. elf companions. Merryweather enters and  
starts talking as she walks towards them. She carries a box of  
black gloves.

MERRYWEATHER  
Oh...so exciting...so exciting....

Merryweather squeals to herself.

MERRYWEATHER

Do you know what today is?

There is a murmur through the recruits.

MERRYWEATEHR

It's Valentines Day! And you, my rough  
nuggets, get to play cupid out there. Like  
chubby little romance elves...

(To the S.L.O. elves)

No offense.

RECRUIT MACKENZIE

What? Valentines? I thought we were a  
Christmas shop here, coach?

MERRYWEATHER

That's where you are wrong, Mackenzie. We  
are in the business of collecting positive  
energy for the world light axis: joy, cheer,  
happy surprises, and my personal favorite:  
Love. So, on the day when so many couples will  
be celebrating, can we collect positive  
energy? Check! Is it appropriate to wear red?  
Check! Can we spread some good cheer? Check!  
Valentines is definitely in our domain.

MacKenzie groans.

Merryweather dumps the box of collector gloves on the floor.

MERRYWEATHER

You will each be given an \*actual\* collection  
glove for the world light axis, But you won't be  
given a spell loop. You won't need it. You will be  
transported to random cities with your sleigh and  
your S.L.O elf will supply you roses from the  
control centre here. You will give these out to  
couples and collect the good vibes. Simple, simple.  
Those who collect the least. Well, you know the  
drill.

RECRUIT DONAVAN

So sappy...



MERRYWEATEHR  
(smiling)  
Just wait until you see your costumes!

Merryweather giggles, holding her clipboard to her chest.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. NIGHT.

The control center is a massive room of electronic panels and stations where the S.L.O. elves sit.

The recruits file in. They are all wearing red silk three-piece suits, with black shirts and red ties. On the pocket of each suit jacket is a heart formed out of glitter. Each carries a red heart-shaped satchel. Some of the recruits look embarrassed by their outfits, others seem proud.

SANTIAGO  
I did not signup for this!

LORI  
It's part of the job. You signed up for the job, right?

SANTIAGO  
I look ridiculous though.

GRADY  
More so than the holo-sant?

SANTIAGO  
Mail room makes a point...

Merryweather is handing out gloves, and directing recruits as they enter.

MERRYWEATHER  
Here's your glove, you are at station 13  
...here's your glove...Station 37...

Grady steps up.

MERRYWEATHER

Looking good Mr. Boots., Here is your glove.  
Go to station 7.

Grady heads on his way. At station 7, Pepperjelly Snells is already at the controls. There are 7 or 8 big computer monitors, some dials, an old school microphone, keyboards, and associated electronic equipment along with a big transportal (person sized), a small transportal (3 feet across) and a tiny transportal (on the desk) which are all closed.

Pepperjelly turns as Grady approaches and starts hysterically laughing.

GRADY

What?

PEPPERJELLY

You just look like a ...  
(laughs harder)

GRADY

Like a what?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Like a sunburnt penguin.  
(snort laugh)  
All red and waddling about....

GRADY

Are you about done?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Not even partly.  
(touching his head)  
I am going to put this into the vault for later. That way I will be making dinner or something and bam! Red penguins and Grady! Laughtershock!!

GRADY

Laughtershock?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Ya, like a laugh aftershock. You think about something funny that happened way earlier and then you laugh again. Laughtershock. You never heard of that?

GRADY

I am glad you are enjoying this.

Pepperjelly nods swiftly. He hits a few buttons on the control panel and the largest transport circle lights up, crackling and sizzling as it comes into view. A city can be seen in it.

GRADY

Ok, where am I headed.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

I am not to tell. If you know the city, it might give you an edge. No worries though, I will guide you. Just head on through and get your sleigh set up.

Grady steps through the transportal, causing it to crackle and zap, and materializes in the city.

EXT. CITY. NIGHT.

Grady takes out the purple type 32 sleigh and throws it on the ground

GRADY

Dancer!

His sleigh turns into a red motorized scooter.

GRADY

(to himself)

Seriously?

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

By the ever melting frosty, is your sleigh a scooter?

GRADY O.S.

I don't want to talk about it.

(more serious)

So where do I find these flowers?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

There is a transportal in your satchel. You can get them there when you need them.

GRADY O.S.

And how does that work.

Pepperjelly jams his hand into the mid sized portal.

EXT. CITY. NIGHT.

A small crackling-zap noise can be heard a mere moment before a hand comes out of the satchel surprising Grady.

GRADY

Son of a....!

(sighing)

Don't ever do that!

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Pepperjelly laughs to himself hysterically.

GRADY O.S.

Where am I headed?

Pepperjelly calms down and looks at his notes.

PEPEPERJELLY SNELLS

2 blocks north and 3 west. Pitman's Steakhouse.

EXT. CITY. NIGHT.

Grady hops on his scooter and zooms into the night.

EXT. PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. NIGHT

Grady parks his (sleigh) scooter out front and starts towards the front door.

GRADY

What's the game here.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Say you are there to sell flowers to young couples. We have done this at Pitman's pretty much every year. Easy Sneezy.

GRADY

Sneezy?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Aren't sneezes easy? I mean they just happen, right?

Grady opens the door.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

On the screen, Pepperjelly can see Grady approaching the hostess station. There is a bowl of free candies. No one is at the station at the moment.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Look down. Throw a few of those candies in your pocket. I am low sugar.

GRADY O.S.

I didn't know you were diabetic.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Not low blood sugar. Just low sugar. I am snackish, is all.

INT. PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. HOSTESS STATION. NIGHT

GRADY

Whatever, man.

Grady grabs a handful of candies and stuffs them in his pocket.  
A 'Crackle-zap' is heard.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Candies shoot out of the smallest transportal and onto the desk.  
Pepperjelly pumps his fists in victory.

INT. PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. HOSTESS STATION. NIGHT

The hostess approaches the station.

HOSTESS

Can I help you?

GRADY

Ah yes, I am from the...

The hostess puts her finger to her lips.

HOSTESS

(interrupting)

You are from Nicholas Florists, right? I  
should have recognized the outfit. You are  
cuter than the last guy, though. New job?

GRADY

Well, this is my audition, so to speak.

HOSTESS

Head on in then. You guys are a fixture every  
year. If you need anything just ...let me know.

Grady smiles.

GRADY

Thanks

He heads on into the restaurant.

HOSTESS

(to herself)

If you need anything else, I am off at 10.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

On the screen we can see Grady head into the restaurant.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Ok, so just work the tables one by one.

GRADY O.S.

I hate those guys that do that. I am going  
my own way on this.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Working the tables is what is recommended.  
I really think you should stick to the script.

Grady veers towards the bathrooms.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(to himself)

But clearly you are an idiot.

INT PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOMS. NIGHT.

Grady stands near the bathroom doors. A man exits the bathroom.

GRADY

Hey, man. You want roses for the lady?

MAN

I don't have any cash, sorry.

He goes to step by, but Grady stops him.

GRADY

We are running a promotion for Nicholas Florists. Roses are free.

MAN

Really? Well, let's see what you got.

Grady reaches into the satchel and finds nothing.

GRADY

(gritting his teeth)

Just looking for the roses.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Pepperjelly chews on a candy. He is distracted, but straightens up.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Right. Coming right up.

He rubs his hands together.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Roses. Roses. Roses.

INT PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOMS. NIGHT.

Grady pulls out a bouquet of the saddest looking daisies. He looks down at them.

GRADY

(whispering)

Honestly?

MAN

I am no flower expert, but those are not roses.

Another man exits the bathroom while they are talking. He stops to watch what is going on.



GRADY

Um, ya. That's true. But everyone gives out roses on Valentines. They are cliché. Roses tell her you are a player. They tell her you are just another guy. You know? Do you want her to think that?

MAN

No.

GRADY

I could see that about you. So, I thought you might like these instead. Daisies tell a different story. They say you are cool, confident, and took the time to pick something special.

MAN

I'll take them.

The man takes the flowers and heads into the restaurant.

MAN #2

Do you have any more?

GRADY

For you, buddy, you bet.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Your way is paying off. Not bad.

He rubs his hands together, and with a poof, there is another bouquet of daisies. He shoves them through the mid-sized transportal.

INT. PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. MAIN RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

The man takes the flowers to his girlfriend and sits down. She smiles adoringly and holds them tight against her chest.

A red energy emanates from the woman and drifts towards the bathrooms.

A man in a dark suit, blue tie, and sunglasses at the edge of the restaurant, a Greedle, notices the red energy and looks towards where it is flowing.

INT PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOMS. NIGHT.

Grady hands the second man the flowers.

GRADY

Here you go.

MAN #2

Thanks. I owe you one.

GRADY

No it's all...

The red energy collects in his glove and makes him stumble back a bit. He rights himself.

GRADY

(to himself)

Sunflower.

MAN #2

(confused)

What?

GRADY

It's all sunflower.

The second man turns and walks off, shaking his head.

GRADY

(calling after him)

That's a florist expression.

The greedle from the main restaurant enters the area.

GREEDLE

Do you have a permit to sell those here?

GRADY

I'm sorry, who are you?

GREEDLE

I'm from corporate. I am going to have to ask you to leave.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

He's a straight up greedle.

Grady holds a finger up to the Greedle. He walks a bit in the other direction.

GRADY

(quietly)

Excuse me? A what?

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

A greedle. Dark axis magic user. Remember the greasy dude in the limo with the blue tie.

On the monitor the greedle approaches Grady.

GRADY O.S.

Right. Right. I didn't know they had a name.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Heads up. He's right behind you. Just get out of there.

INT PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOMS. NIGHT.

Grady turns around to face the Greedle.

GRADY

Can you excuse me for a second? I really have to pee.

GREEDLE

I really must ask to see...

Grady doesn't wait for him to continue. He bolts into the bathroom.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Merryweather approaches Station 7. An elf assistant comes with her. We can see Grady in the bathroom on the monitor.

MERRYWEATHER

What seems to be the problem here?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

A greedle ambushed him.

MERRYWEATHER

That's 7 recruits this has happened to tonight so far. This can't be coincidence.

(to her assistant)

Please run to Head Claus Bergmann and ask if she can join us. Tell her it's a code 9.

The assistant nods and walks off briskly.

INT PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. MENS BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Grady sees the window in the bathroom, but it's up high. He sprints to the sinks and jumps up on top to get better access to the window. He opens it and get's half his torso out, but not yet his legs.

The Greedle from the hallways enters the bathroom and raises his hand with a spell loop underneath. A bolt of blue/black energy hits the mirror above the sink just as Grady's legs lift up to go out the window. The mirror explodes.

EXT. BACK ALLEY OUTSIDE PITMANS STEAK HOUSE. NIGHT.

Grady tumbles out the window. He hits the ground in a roll and stands up panting. There are two other greedles in front of him.

GRADY

Are you fellows from corporate as well?

GREEDLE #2

You could say that.

Greedle #2 raises his hand with a spell loop towards Grady. Grady quickly sidesteps and pushes the greedles arm towards Greedle #3 just as a bolt of blue/black energy shoots out. Greedle #3 ducks as the energy shoots above his head, slamming into the building behind and making an explosive hole in the bricks.

Grady punches Greedle #2 and uses the confusion to run down the alley.

EXT. PITMANS STEAKHOUSE. NIGHT

Grady exists the alley at a sprint. The original Greedle from inside the restaurant is now on the outside trying to tinker with his scooter.

GRADY

Prancer!

The scooter turns into a glowing purple cube which shoots right to Grady's hand. The Greedle turns towards Grady and snarls.

The other two Greedles exit the alley in pursuit.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

On Pepperjelly's monitor we can see Grady running and the Greedles in pursuit.

GRADY O.S.

Any suggestions?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

One second.

(turning to Merryweather)

Well?

MERRYWEATHER

Let me get the word.

She turns and walks off.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Like...maybe try to make your way back to the entry point.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE.

Merryweather walks up to Bergmann, who has since arrived at the Control Centre.

BERGMANN

Status.

MERRYWEATHER

Three quarters of our recruits have been attacks by Greedles.

BERGMANN

What?

MERRYWEATHER

That's not all. Get this. Most of those have been attacked by Greedles working together.

BERGMANN

That can't be. They never work together.

MERRYWEATHER

Well, they are today. What do we do?

BERGMANN

Can they be easily pulled out?

MERRYWEATHER

Not so much. We are working on it.

BERGMANN

Give them spell loops then.

MERRYWEATHER

But..only three or four of them have the training for it.

BERGMANN

It's all we've got. Give them the loops.  
Get the S.L.O.'s to guide them.

EXT. DARKENED STREET. NIGHT.

Grady runs down the street. The Greedles follow. Grady ducks as a beam of blue/black energy shoots over his head.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Check your pocket, I put a spell loop in there.

GRADY

Great, but I don't know how to use it.

Grady reaches in and pulls out the brass spell loop. He looks at it as he runs and puts it on his right hand.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

You've got to sort of feel the energy of the light axis and use your mind to bend it into a form you need.

A fireball shoots past Grady as he swerves to the right. Green energy evaporates from Grady due to his fear. It collects in the blue ties of the Greedles following him.

GRADY

Don't you know? I mean I have seen you do lots of magic,

PEPEPRJELLY SNELLS O.S.  
That's elf magic. It's different than wizard  
magic. Be a wizard.

GRADY  
I don't know how to be a wizard. I was a  
postal worker!

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Pepperjelly shrugs.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Good point. Well...just try some stuff I guess.

GRADY O.S.  
That's all you've got for me?

In the background Merryweather mouths the phrase 'Help Him'

EXT. DARKENED STREET. NIGHT.

A Greedle approaches and he is wielding a giant mallet clearly  
made from magical energy.

Grady rubs his hands together.

GRADY  
(to himself)  
Ok. Be a wizard. Be a wizard. Get your Gandalf  
on.

The mallet swings.

Grady closes his eyes in concentration.

GRADY  
(to himself)  
Wizard. Wizard. Wizard.

The spell loop produces a few sparks and then Grady is slammed  
with the mallet. He goes flying into a building. He rolls on the



ground groaning. A ton of green energy flows off of him and collects in the ties of the greedle.

GREEDLE #1

Ah, pain. Delicious. Your misery only fuels us.

The two other Greedles catch up to him and start kicking and punching him. Green energy flows into the blue ties of all three greedless. They grin.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Grady! You have to get up. Use the loop. You have to really want it. And stop being afraid, for goodness sakes!

The beating continues

GRADY

(slurred)

I don't want it? Wha...

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Look Boots! You are getting your keester beaten by a bunch of wimps in suits. Corporate jerk faces. Are you going to stand for that.

He takes a punch right across the face.

GRADY

(weakly)

no.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

What did you say? It sounded like failure.

He recoils after a kick.

GRADY

Look you pointy eared piece of...

Light flashes from the spell loop and in Grady's hand is a shield made of peppermint candy, much like the one he saw in the gadgets lab. He swings it and smacks one Greedle off of him. Then he rolls backwards and stands up.

GRADY

I. SAID. NO!!! I will not take it!

Grady wipes some blood from his mouth.

GRADY

(to the greedles)

Let's see what you've got, dirt bags! I do not fear you.

All three use their dark spell loops to produce either the blue-black energy bolt, or fire, or other projectiles. Everything stops at the peppermint shield, though it does ship away some candy from it as it is hit with things.

GRADY

My turn.

Grady smacks Greedle #1 with the shield, while using the spell loop to conjure a thick string or garland that snakes around Greedle #2, tying him up. Greedle #2 falls to the ground writhing, trying to escape the garland.

GREEDLE #3

I am afraid I am going to have to downsize you. You are bad for the local economy. No offence. It's just business.

Greedle #3 punches Grady. Grady rubs his chin and raises his right hand and Christmas balls (ornaments) of various hues shoot out of it, lining the ground. Grady turns to run. Greedle #3 tries to chase, but loses his balance stepping on all the Christmas balls.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Bergmann and Merryweather are standing behind Pepperjelly watching things unfold. Sirens are sounding in the background in the control centre.

Grady is on the screen running away.

GRADY O.S.

That won't keep them long. What do I do?

BERGMANN

Pull him out, Mr. Snells.

Pepperjelly nods and then speaks into his microphone.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Ok go 2 blocks east and 1 south and it will  
take you to the original transportal location.  
I can get you back from there.

EXT. DARKENED STREET. NIGHT.

GRADY

Got it.

Grady throws the purple Type 32 Sleigh cube as he runs.

GRADY

Dancer!

The cube materializes into the red scooter again.

Grady jumps on it at a run and starts it up. The scooter zips  
off into the night leaving several greedles in the dust, one of  
which is still removing garland from his suit.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. STATION 7. NIGHT.

Grady materializes through the big transportal near station 7.

GRADY

What the hell was that?

BERGMANN

What indeed.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. NIGHT.

There are S.L.O. elves still working their stations. Others are tending to injured or unconscious recruits. The sirens are blaring.

Bergmann has a look of shock upon her face.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. LECTURE HALL. DAY

The five remaining recruits sit in the stadium seating desks in the lecture hall as do many elves and Santa corps staff.

Berggman stands at the front of the lecture hall. Behind her on a huge screen is a scene from the previous night of four greedles chasing down a recruit.

BERGMANN

Here is what we know. Last night at the Valentine's collection event, most of our recruits were attacked by Greedles. Not just by Greedles but by Greedles working together.

There is a collective gasp in the room.

BERGMANN

Ok, settle. Settle. We lost 9 recruits. 9.

SANTA CORP EMPLOYEE

Lost like...

The employee runs a finger across his throat.

BERGMANN

No, not dead. But so badly beaten that they will need hospital care.

Grady raises his hand.

BERGMANN

Yes, Mr. Boots?

GRADY

The Greedles are like the anti-santa's right? Why is everyone so shocked to hear

they were working together? Doesn't it make sense that they would?

BERGMANN

It has been our saving grace that they do not. Their greed and selfish nature make collaboration pretty much impossible. The truth is that their magic is more powerful than ours. What they do produces fear and that fear in turn generates magic for them. Their magic fuels and grows itself easily. Our only way to combat that, through the ages has been the whole strength in numbers, collaboration deal. If we don't have that as an edge, its trouble, my friends.

LORI

If they do not work easily together, then what is causing them to do so?

BERGMANN

Now that's the golden question, isn't it? That, and do we have anything that can boost us up a bit to match their newfound cooperation?

Bergmann points to Matthias

BERGMANN

Matthias? Anything from the gadgets lab that can help?

Matthias stands.

MATTHIAS

Actually, the timing is interesting. I am just doing the final tests on a batch of more powerful spell loops for the corps.

There is some cheering in the lecture hall and some shouts of 'Ya, Matthias!'

BERGMANN

When will they be ready?

MATTHIAS

Not for months yet, but definitely before the holiday season.

(beat)

You will definitely be shocked by what they can do.

BERGMANN

Ok then.

(to the recruits)

Recruits! We will have a meeting on the Greedles this afternoon. But for now, back to training.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The five remaining recruits (Grady, Santiago, Lori, Ellington, and Bingham) and their S.L.O elves chat amongst themselves as Merryweather approaches. A series of coniferous tree in tree stands sit a good 20 feet off.

MERRYWEATHER

So few of you left.

(sadly)

So very few.

Merryweather is lost in thought and staring at the recruits, glassy eyed.

SANTIAGO

So...coach...what's the game plan?

MERRYWEATHER

Right. Sorry... I was just lost in the moment there. We will be working on using our spell loops today. Channelling the energy of the light axis to magical effect.

BINGHAM

And the two that do the worst are cut. We know the drill.

MERRYWEATHER

Heavens no. Valentines cut too many of you prematurely. I dare not cut any of you. So let's

just focus on the learning without the threat of not making it. Sound good?

The recruits murmur in the affirmative.

MERRYWEATHER

Though I was planning on saying 'This spells the end of the road for two of you' when I had to cut a few of you. Spells. Get it?

The recruits are quiet.

MERRYWEATHER

Anyway, so those of you left either had previous training with a spell loop or you figured it out in a hasty fashion to save your bacon. That makes my job slightly easier. Basically I have to make sure that you haven't formed any bad habits with it. The basics: worn on the right hand loop above the fingers.

Merryweather extends her right hand.

MERRYWEATHER

You remember how you accept the energy with the black glove. Expending it is much the same, but the reverse. It's a cycle much like breathing. In. Out. In. Out. Only on the way out, you use your \ mind to shape the energy.

Merryweather squints slightly and then a beam of blue extends from her spell loop and creates a translucent form of a reindeer that gallops merrily around the room, shimmering and sparkling as it moves.

MERRYWEATHER

(softly)

Out..

The recruits mutter 'wow' and 'amazing' as the reindeer gallops past. Red energy flows from them due to their wonder as they witness the reindeer. It collects in Merryweather's black glove.

MERRYWEATHER

And in. Remember that it is a release more than a struggle. You are allowing the energy to flow through you and just shaping it as it does so... like a waterwheel on a river. Got it?

The recruits nod.

MERRYWEATHER

You likely do not understand as much as you think. But you will. Your first task is to decorate these trees. Make them as festive as you possibly can. I will monitor your spell loop use as you do. We could all use some cheer right now, so wow me. Wow each other.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. TREE NUMBER 5. DAY

Grady and Pepperjelly Snells examine their tree before they begin.

GRADY

Any ideas?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

No one is getting cut. My recommendation is to phone it in. Never do more than you have to. That's the very definition of 'elf-ficiency'.

GRADY

Don't you mean 'efficiency'?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Efficient still means you are doing something. You can pull a muscle or exhaust yourself doing something. Elf-ficiency reduces that. It's like if efficiency and procrastination had a baby. It's part of the 10 point code of the elves along with 'Sugar Load before doing Magic' and 'Don't be a stereotype'. Those might contradict each other, come to think of it.

GRADY



Cool. Still, not doing that. I want to make it look good.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Well, in that case, I suggest 'Full Throttle Christmas'. We are a Santa shop here, you know.

Grady smiles and shakes a finger at Pepperjelly.

GRADY

(sarcastically)

Funny guy.

(non sarcastically)

I feel you though. Let's holiday the smack out of this.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Let's title it 'Yule never see anything better'!

Pepperjelly and Grady high five.

Grady raises his spell loop and points it at the tree.

GRADY

Ok, some garland.

(to himself)

Like breathing out. Sunflower in, sunflower out.

A beam of green energy shoots towards the ground in front of the tree. Two strands of garland, one red and one green, appear on the ground. They come to life and move like serpents towards the tree and climb it, entwining it.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Not bad.

GRADY

Thanks man.

(to himself)

Of, maybe some decorations

MERRYWEATHER O.S.

(in background)

Bingham, don't force it, that's how you start fires. You see that now, right?

Grady raises his spell loop again. A beam of yellow energy flows to the tree. With plopping noises, Christmas balls form on the tree branches themselves, like they had grown there. They are multi-colour, but they look more like blistery growths than actual decorations. Some are shiny, some are dull, Some are misshapen.

Pepperjelly scrunches up his face.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Oh. Gross...I mean...they are technically decorations, I guess...

One of the Christmas balls pops and green liquid oozes out. Pepperjelly bends over and gags.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Not a winner...not a winner.

GRADY

The ones that are left are kind of festive though...

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Sure. Sure.

MERRYWEATHER O.S.

(in background)

Lori, more focus will get you there...

Grady rubs his hands together.

GRADY

Ok. Lights.

He raises his loop again. Yellow energy shoots out. The air around the tree twinkles with flickering rainbow hued lights. Pepperjelly gives an enthusiastic thumbs up.

GRADY

And for my topper. You are going to 'Elf-ing'

love it.

His loop is up and in action. The tree topper forms. It's a perfect tiny replica of PepperyJelly Snells with a santa suit on.

Pepperjelly looks on in awe.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

I \*do\* 'elf-ing' love it. It just radiates a sort of jolly handsomeness to the rest of the tree.

Merryweather wanders by, looking at the tree.

MERRYWEATHER

Not bad, Mr. Boots. Though those baubles... they indicate a spell that was thrown without a complete mental image first. You need to work on that.

Another of the baubles bursts with a flatulent sound and lets loose some green goo. Merryweather raises an eyebrow.

MERRYWHEATHER

Good thing I am not cutting anyone this time.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The recruits stand by their trees as Merryweather marches up and down.

All trees are done pretty well, but Lori's has it's very needles changes to appear red and white like a peppermint candy and Santiago's has an appearance of a robotic Christmas tree cyborg and even moves about on it's cyborg tree legs.

MERRYWEATHER

These are all fine, but did any of you think of modifying the tree itself? Look at Lori's or Santiago's trees. They were thinking outside the box on this. You need to let your imagination loose when using magic. And now, back to more

spell training.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Spell Loop Training

A) Merryweather on the part of the training facility with roofs. She stands on a chimney, says "We don't get down there by sucking in our guts". Her spell loop is raised and with a sparkle from the loop, she gets narrow and down she goes.

B) Grady on the chimney, spell loop up. He sparkles and gets stuck in the chimney. Pepperjelly snells facepalms. Lori and Santiago go down their chimneys in the background.

C) Bingham shooting a beam of fire, face determined.

D) Ellington deflecting a projectile with a peppermint shield

E) Grady on the chimney again. This time it works and he goes down the chimney. Pepperjelly gives a thumbs up.

F) Merryweather pointing and yelling "Faster! Faster! You got this!"

G) Santiago running and diving over a fire beam that was shot at him. The rest of the recruits behind him doing the same. Lori turns and blocks a fire beam with a peppermint shield.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The recruits stand, some leaning, panting and out of breath. The S.L.O. elves do not seem much better.

Merryweather walks up and tosses them some towels. They are eager to grab them and wipe away the sweat. Santiago dumps a bunch of his water bottle over his head to cool off.

MERRYWEATHER

Whew! Now that was a good training day.  
That's what I like to see! Is everyone  
happy with today?

Most just keep panting.

ELLINGTON  
(quietly, sarcastically)  
yay.

INT. SANTA CORPS FACILITY. HALLWAY. DAY

Grady is walking along the hallway, still using his towel to wipe away the sweat.

Pepperjelly Snells jogs up briskly behind him.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Wait. Wait up man.

Grady stops and turns.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Thanks. I wanted to apologize...

GRADY  
For what?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Well, I was kind of mean to start with, but in like a delightful way I would say. But also I misrepresented myself. I implied, the Snells Are a big thing, and they are, but I am not.

GRADY  
What do you mean?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Well, my whole family have been Spirit Liason Officers. It is just expected of us. I have tried out for it 6 times. Every time I failed. Well, either I messed it up, or my assigned Santa Recruit messed it up. Either way, elves only get 7 chances to apply to the S.L.O. program...

GRADY  
And you were assigned me for your seventh shot.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

That's the thing. You. A mail carrier. I didn't think my chances were high and I kind of took it out on you. But you are doing really great and I think we have a chance as a team. I really do.

GRADY

Me too, buddy.

Grady hands him his towel. Pepperjelly gladly takes it.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

You want a fresh one?

GRADY

Sure!

Grady grabs his water bottle, closes his eyes, and takes a huge sip.

Pepperjelly reaches up towards Grady's face, there is a poof of magic and a dirty dishcloth lands on top of his water bottle.

Grady opens his eyes and shakes off the dishcloth.

GRADY

What the...?

Pepperjelly fist pumps

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Boom. Dirty dishcloth for the win.

GRADY

I thought you were done being mean to me.

Pepperjelly shrugs.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

It's a process.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. LECTURE HALL. DAY

The five recruits sit in the stadium seating desks in the lecture hall with their S.L.O. counterparts.

Bergmann stands at the front of the lecture hall. Behind her on a huge screen is a smarmy looking business guy in a suit, sunglasses, and a blue tie.

BERGMANN

So, the greedles. The truth is they were here before us. Not long before us, but before us. Like us, they are wizards. They have energy collectors.

The background image zooms in on the blue tie.

BERGMANN

And spell loops.

The background image zooms in on the spell loop worn below the fingers.

BERGMANN

But the difference is that they work with the dark axis instead.

The background image changes to a dark spindle of energy twisting slowly.

BERGMANN

They are constantly trying to force the world onto a darker path and they have succeeded many times in the past. This is a path of higher greed and selfishness.

The background flickers through images of war, famine, plague, etc.

BERGMANN

They are very persuasive. They consistently tell people about the economy and how it is doing. They talk of inflation, return on investment, gross domestic product, and interest rates. None of this shows you how

happy the common person is. It only gauges  
how well greed is currently working.

The background flips from pictures of wall street and banks to  
pictures of people eating a meager meal by candlelight.

BERGMANN

They whisper things to stop belief in all  
things wonderous. They are likely the source  
of the first time you were told that 'Santa  
wasn't real'

The background changes to a greedle whispering in a child's ear.

BERGMANN

You can recognize them by their suits,  
sunglasses, and blue ties. They drive dark  
sedans or limousines. And there are more of  
them than us.

The background changes to show a sea of Greedles.

BERGMANN

And up until now our saving grace has been  
that they do not seem to coordinate or work  
together. Cooperation seemed to be the  
antithesis of greed. That changed, as you saw,  
the other night.

Lori raises her hand.

BERGMANN

Yes?

LORI

Do we know why they have started working  
together?

Bergmann sighs and looks downwards.

BERGMANN

We don't...and that scares the sleighbells  
right off me.



INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

The five remaining recruits and their S.L.O. elves are arrayed in the gym. Merryweather faces them.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok recruits this is it. It's an all out test of the skills. The santa wannabes will deliver presents to 10 houses as fast as they can. Their S.L.O. elves will direct and assist from the training control centre. This a straight up race, folks.

LORI

And we do like 3 heats and the slowest two are cut? Like usual?

MERRYWEATHER

Nope. One heat. One winner. Four will be cut.

There are several groans in exasperation.

Grady leans over to Pepperjelly Snells.

GRADY

(whispering)

I have an idea to give us an edge. Can you pass a transportal through another transportal?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Of course, but why would you want to...

GRADY

Just listen....

Grady continues to whisper to Pepperjelly and his eyes go wide. Then he nods vigorously and they high five.

MERRYWEATHER

Ok, Santa's to their marks, S.L.O's to their stations.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING CONTROL CENTRE. DAY

Pepperjelly Snells is set up at his station. There is the standard 3 sizes of portal and two bonus large portals.

He does a poof of magic and a present appears between his hands. An ugly green wrapping paper on the present, but a present nonetheless.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(into the microphone)

Pepperjelly online here. Our system is ready to go.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

GRADY

Excellent. I am ready when you are.

Merryweather blows her whistle.

MERRYWEATHER

And...go!

The recruits jolly run across the first rooftop. Each of them uses their spell loops to get thin and zip down the chimney with ease. Lori is the quickest to this spot, with Santiago and Grady close behind.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING HOUSE #1. DAY

Grady pops out of the fireplace, quickly dumps a plate of cookies down his jacket pocket and reaches into the bag to pull out the present Pepperjelly had previously created and put it under the tree. He then sprints back to the fireplace and magic's himself up the chimney with his spell loop.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

Grady pops out of his chimney. Lori is already on her way to the next house. Santiago pops out of his just a tiny bit after

Grady. Grady then reaches into his bag and pulls out two hoops that look like wreaths connected by a rope. These hoops have transportals inside them. He throws one forward like a frisbee and puts the other one down, jumping into it.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING CONTROL CENTRE. DAY

Pepperjelly is at his station making a second gift when Grady pops out of one of the bonus portals and immediately jumps into the one beside it.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

Grady pops out of the transportal he threw forward grabs it and runs to the next chimney while stuffing the two wreath hoops back in the Santa bag. He catches up a bit to Lori.

Santiago pauses for a second seeing this in action.

SANTIAGO

(to himself)

By Bliltzen's bells, that's genius

This leap frogging continues. Grady down a chimney. Grady up the chimney. Grady leap frogging through the portals for 9 more houses. At the end he and Lori are neck and neck. It is hard to say who is winning. Grady crosses the finish line, he falls to his knees and pumps his fist.

GRADY

Yes!!

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING CONTROL CENTRE. DAY

Pepperjellys spins in his chair, a look of pure bliss on his face.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

That's how it's done. Straight to the bank, baby! I told you I could do it, Ma!

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

The other recruits reach the finish line. All are panting.

MERRYWEATHER

That was a really close one. By all means I think that was a tie. Some may not agree, but I am going to have to give it to Lori.

GRADY

What?

SANTIAGO

Seriously? I mean, I didn't think dude was wizard material, but that was sorcerer level innovative. What gives?

MERRYWEATHER

I said it was a straight up race. Sure, Mr. Boots showed great innovation in his thinking, but Lori matched his run without any of that.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING CONTROL CENTRE. DAY

Pepperjelly stands. His ears droop in disappointment. His chair keeps spinning slowly in the background.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Wait. What? You were clearly a bit out front. Since when is innovation a bad thing? What a way to coal a guys stocking.

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. ROOFTOP AREA. DAY

MERRYWEATHER

Besides, a stunt like that could have been dangerous. What if he threw his portal badly and it hit another recruit. I could have him disqualified just for that.

LORI

But he didn't. It was perfect every time. I am certain he came in slightly ahead of me. He won fair and square.

MERRYWEATHER

I'm sorry, folks. Done is done. It is ultimately my decision to make. From my vantage point it looked like a dead tie. And I think Lori is the best candidate.

LORI

But coach....

Grady holds up his hand.

GRADY

It's fine. I thought I was doing something cool, but it's all sunflower. Merryweather is right. I wish you all the best.

Grady hugs her. She still looks baffled by the situation. He goes to walk off. Santiago wraps his arm around Grady's shoulders.

SANTIAGO

You should have won, mail room. That move was pure jingle.

Grady pulls back and gives Santiago a fist bump.

GRADY

Pure, unadulterated jingle.

MONTAGE

-Grady in his postal uniform. He walks his route with his head down, slowly. An elderly woman points to a nearby tree. Grady drops his mailbag, losing a letter or two to the ground. He raises his hand as if to use the spell loop, then realizes dejectedly that he doesn't have one and heads over to climb the tree. He grabs the cat and heads down. He hands the cat over without even looking or talking to the lady.

-Pepperjelly Snells lying on a linoleum floor in a starfish position. He is wearing a white tank top and boxers. Surrounding him are a mostly devoured plate of gingersnaps. Gingersnap and candy cane chunks litter the floor. Tears stream down his cheeks.

-Grady eating dinner alone in his apartment with fall leaves swirling outside. He instinctively grabs a chunk of his desert and puts it in his shirt jacket pocket. Realizing, he looks towards the window sadly.

-Pepperjelly Snells walking in the snow. He gets hit with a snowball. His face furrows in anger. He turns, rubs his hands together to produce some magic. There is a poof and he goes to throw it back when he realizes what he made was a dirty dishcloth. He stares at the dishcloth as he is hit 3 more times with snowballs.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. LECTURE HALL. DAY

Bergmann and Matthias stand at the front facing a sea of Santa's in various red suits. They are actively chatting with each other.

BERGMANN

Ok. Quiet down. Quiet down

The room quiets.

BERGMANN

I know there has been some, let's say, anxiety about the Greedles and what happened to our recruits on their Valentine's run. And I know I have promised some help was coming to aid us in case they try to hit us en masse during the holidays. Well, I am here to tell you that time is now. Our esteemed gadget master, Matthias, has crafted a next gen spell loop. Matthias, you want to explain it?

MATTHIAS

Gladly. These new loops have 300% output of their predecessors and a gain in frectacle

janus transference from the light spindle.

The Santa's look at each other in confusion.

MATTHIAS

(clarifying)

They kick some yuletide booty!

SANTA'S

Ya!!!

MATTHIAS

And for the frosting on the cake, a Santa can  
pull in extra magic  
from the loops of adjacent Santas. That way we  
can work together even when we are apart.

Merryweather raises her hand.

MERRYWEATHER

How would that work.

MATTHIAS

Ah, a demonstration. Great idea.

Matthias slips on his spell loop. And dumps a pile more on a  
nearby table.

MATTHIAS

Bergmann, would you indulge me in a bit of a  
duel?

BERGMANN

This is highly irregular, Matthias. I don't  
think...

MATTHIAS

We won't actually be hurting each other. It's  
just a gentleman's duel. Try to tie me up in  
garland and I will resist.

Bergmann pauses for a moment and nods.

BERGMANN

In the spirit of demonstration, let's do it.

MATTHIAS

(to Santa's)

Now normally, Bergmann could beat me hands down, being the better wizard as she is.

Bergmann blushes and takes a bow.

MATTHIAS

But I will be drawing in extra from the loops on the table here.

(to Bergmann)

Ready?

Bergmann nods and they face each other. She lifts her spell loop, as does Matthias. There is a pop of energy and garland shoots from Bergmann spell loop like festive tendrils. Matthias's loop makes a crackling sound and green bards of energy shoot from the loops on the table to his loop and then deflect the garland easily and at the same time encase Bergmann in ice and raise her up above the ground. Her ice encrusted form spins slowly.

There is a collective 'Ooooh' from the Santa's.

MATTHIAS

You can see how effective that is.

He uses his spell loop again to create a giant portal.

MATTHIAS

Now I have a training ground set up for you to test these out. Everyone grab a spell loop and head through the portal. Work together and it should be easy and fun!

The Santa's file up and grab loops and disappear into the portal. When the last one has gone, Matthias steps towards the floating Bergmann.

MATTHIAS

May the best man win, indeed. You wondered



how the Greedles were able to organize? That was me. You wonder how they knew where our recruits would be? Also me. You are a fool, Bergmann. You may have thwarted me rightfully being the head Santa, but I became something even greater: The very first Groonta, head of the greedless.

He marches out of the room and the light darkens. The last light illuminates sadness in Bergmann eyes.

EXT. OLD CASTLE. NIGHT.

The Santa's fill the courtyard of an old castle. A dragon made of what looks like gingerbread swoops through the sky and dives at them once. It has giant peppermint candies for eyes and is adorned with giant gumdrops and licorice pieces. It's basically every favorite Christmas cookie and candy all wrapped up in one dragon.

MERRYWEATHER

Gingerbread dragon, we will make short work of him. Let's hustle Santas!

Lori grabs her arm

LORI

Wait, something feels very wrong about this.

MERRYWEATHER

It's just a bit of fun. No worries. We can send back bits of the dragon For the S.L.O.s ... they love gingerbread.

As the dragon comes in for another pass, Merryweather turns and lifts her loop to aim at the dragon. It crackles and connects with green bars to the other Santa's loops. A bar of fire emerges from Merryweather's loop and then fizzles out. The Santa's however, all become encased in green resin and fall to the ground. Every one of them is incapacitated.

INT. CAVE SYSTEM. NIGHT.

Many Greedles in black suits, sunglasses, and blue ties aim their loops at a group of elves herding them into a giant cave. One greedle uses his magic to shoot a green ray at the rock wall, bringing down a ton of rock, sealing the cave.

INT. LUXURIOUS OFFICE BUILDING. NIGHT.

Matthias sits behind a large fancy desk, slowly shaving his grizzled beard off with an electric razor.

A greedle enters and stands before him.

GREEDLE

It is done, Groonta.

MATTHIAS

Good man. Ironically, this means Christmas bonuses for everyone.

INT. GRADY BOOTS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Grady sits on his couch, slumped down, depressed. A bag of chips lies lazily by his side. A drink sits empty on the side table (and partly spilled).

A man enters in the background, moves around the apartment and opens the fridge. Grady turns slightly to look.

GRADY

I am not even going to ask. A Santa, right?

The man flops down on the couch with a soda he had poured for himself. It's Gerard. He is clean shaven and wearing a red wind breaker.

GERARD

Well, sort of. Retired. I was a Santa. I was sorry to hear you weren't selected. I was the one that suggested you, just so you know.

He raises his glass.

GERARD

Cheers.

Grady lazily looks over at the extended mug and slowly grabs his and clinks it.

GRADY

Cheers. To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit.

GERARD

Well. I understand you being mopey about everything, but sometimes done isn't done. A little bird has told me there might be trouble at the Santa Corps. Sometimes trouble brings second chances for those willing to help.

Gerard takes a big sip of his drink. Grady sits up suddenly.

GRADY

Trouble? Like what.

GERARD

I don't know. Bergmann usually stops by once a week, but she missed this week. And she isn't answering her texts.

GRADY

So why don't you...

Gerard raises a fluffy white eyebrow as Grady trails off.

GRADY

...retired...right.

GERARD

And looking to stay that way.

Gerard stands and pats Grady on the back.

GERARD

I will leave the 'Getting Involved' to younger and more able bodies.

Grady nods to himself.

GERARD

I will let myself out.

Grady stand suddenly.

GRADY

How do I get there again?

Gerrard turns back, handing Grady a slip of paper.

GERARD

I believe you know an elf in Philadelphia.  
He has the means.

Grady looks at the address on the paper, recognition spreading on his face.

GRADY

I do. And thanks.

GERARD

For what?

GRADY

Everything.

GERARD

Oh...and hero?

GRADY

What?

Gerard reaches into his pocket, pulls out a spell loop, and tosses it to Grady. Grady catches it with ease.

GERARD

You might need this. It served me well for many years.

INT. GRADY'S CAR. DAY

Grady is focused on driving, intent on the road. Carol of the bells plays aggressively in the background. A red, white, and green reindeer bobblehead nods back and forth on the dash.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA. OUTSIDE THE SNELL RESIDENCE. DAY

Grady's car pulls up to a screeching halt outside the Snell residence. Grady hops out, pulls the address out of his pocket and looks at the house. There is a sign on the porch that says 'Snell', with a subtitle of 'We put the Elf in Philadelphia'.

GRADY  
(to himself)  
That checks out.

Grady sprints up to the door and knocks.

INT. SNELL RESIDENCE. DAY

There is a constant and insistent knocking on the door.

Pepperjelly Snells walks to the door in his bathrobe. He looks unkempt.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
(to himself)  
What in the ever-loving jingle?

He opens the door and Grady bursts in.

GRADY  
Can you make a transportal to the Santa Corps?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
No 'Hi Pepperjelly'? No 'I have missed  
your brilliance, Pepperjelly'?

Grady sighs.

GRADY  
I have missed your brilliance, Pepperjelly.

Peperjelly breaks out a huge smile.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

You had me at hello! Now what's the issue...

GRADY

I never said hello.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

But now you did. See what I did there?

GRADY

Funny. Somethings wrong. Christmas might be in jeopardy.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Say no more. I will get my emergency festive sugar kit and we will hit the road.

INT. SNELL RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

A glass case adorns the wall that says 'Break in Case of Emergency'. Inside are candies, cookies, chocolates, etc.

A small hand wielding a small hammer swings towards the glass.

The glass shatters. Candies are grabbed.

INT. SANTA CORPS FACILITY. HALLWAY. DAY.

The air shimmers and Pepperjelly Snells and Grady step out of the end point of a transportal circle. The both look around.

GRADY

Nothing. Super quiet.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Like weird silent. This place is usually bustling.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. LECTURE HALL. DAY

Grady and Pepperjelly enter the lecture hall. They stop dead in their tracks noticing Bergmann encased in ice and floating above the ground, spinning slowly.

GRADY

Whoa ...is she...?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Dead? No look at those eyes. Those are alive eyes. Right?

GRADY

I don't know. Can you get her out?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Not my type of magic. I can make stuff real good. Getting her out is more Santa type of magic.

Grady rubs his hands together and then raises his right hand (with the spell loop he got from Gerard)

GRADY

Ok. Ok. Let me give this a shot.

A beam of fire shoots out of his spell loop and hits the ice, melting some, but pushing it into the wall.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(wincing)

Easy. Easy.

GRADY

It's a beam of fire. Like how easy can it be?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Like a gentle fire, man. A campfire or something

Grady raises his spell loop and fires again. This time the beam is thicker, yet meanders casually towards the target. It wraps around and melts the ice. Bergmann falls to the ground. She

coughs and spits up water and then rights herself. Grady and Pepperjelly race to her side to help her up.

BERGMANN  
(coughing)  
Matthias! It was Matthias.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. HEAD CLAUS OFFICE. DAY

Bergmann sits behind a large oaken desk. On the walls are portraits of head clauses of the past. On her desk stands a small Christmas tree decked out to the nines and scattered about the office are iconic toys of Christmases' past.

BERGMANN  
I just didn't see it coming. What sort of head Claus am I?

GRADY  
A trusting one. That's not a bad thing.

While they are talking, Pepperjelly sneaks a cookie from a plate on the desk.

BERGMANN  
I saw where he took them. Through the transportal I mean. It was Krammerung castle. And the elves...I don't know...I have no idea where they went.

Bergmann sighs.

BERGMANN  
We are just done this year. I cannot possibly salvage Christmas. I cannot rescue the Santa's and also figure out where the elves got to and liberate them as well. Christmas is off. The world will just spin towards a darker axis next year.

GRADY  
If I may, that's why I am here. I want to help. So does Pepperjelly.



Pepperjelly mumbles something unintelligible as his mouth is stuffed with cookie. He coughs. Then he gives a thumbs up.

BERGMANN

No offence, Mr. Boots, but you are just a rookie and one that washed out of training I might add. This isn't like all those Hollywood movies where they save Christmas in the nick of time just by working faster. I need all those Santa's or we are done. Just what do you think you going can do?

GRADY

Ok. True. I don't know what I can do. But I know it's 100% more than if I give up right now. Shouldn't we try?

Bergmann taps her fingernails on her desk. Then she smiles.

BERGMANN

I can see why Gerard wanted you for the program, Grady Boots. You are insidiously inspiring. Ok. Let's try.

(To Pepperjelly)

Can you get him to Krammerung?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Easy sneezy

BERGMANN

Ok. You mount the rescue, Grady. I need to find the elves. Any thoughts on that?

Pepperjelly reaches slowly and purposefully towards the table and grabs a cookie. He raises it up so all can see and raises an eyebrow.

BERGMANN

(exhasperated)

Yes, you can have another one.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

No! I mean...uh... yes I will eat it. But no,

you humans are so dense sometimes. You know those small transportals in Santa pockets that cookies are dumped into?

GRADY

They go to the S.L.O. elves so they can eat them, right?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

And?

Bergmann claps her hands together in realization.

BERGMANN

That's brilliant. We can track the location of those transportals from the control centre. Ok. I will track down the elves then. Let's get to it.

Bergmann gets up and strides to the door.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

(whispering to Grady)

Did you hear what she called me?

GRADY

(whispering)

I didn't quite catch it.

Pepperjelly shoots him a look.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly Snells sits at the controls firing things up. Grady is in a standard looking Santa outfit with his black glove on the left hand and spell loop on the right.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Ok...Krammerung...Krammerung...got it. I am going to put you a few kilometers out as I am not sure what I am getting you into here. Use your sleigh.

GRADY

Check.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Also, no pressure, but don't fail...or die. Or fail and die. That one is the worst of the options.

GRADY

Don't die and don't fail. Check. Don't worry man, everything's going to be smooth Christmas morning.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Smooth Christmas Morning. I like that.

Pepperjelly motions to the large transportal.

Grady hesitates for a moment and then heads through.

EXT. OUTSIDE KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. NIGHT.

Grady materializes. In the distance is Krammerung Castle. Something flies above it, though at this distance it appears small.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Use your Type 32 Sleigh. No mopeds this time.

GRADY

Funny guy.

Grady pulls out the purple cube and closes his eyes as he throws it.

GRADY

Dancer!

A red adventure motorcycle appears in front of him.

GRADY

Well, well, Christmas just came early.

Grady hops on the bike and starts it up. The motor purrs. He revs it up and take off down the road to the castle.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly watches Grady's progress on the monitor.

GRADY O.S.

Can you create some of those wreath transportals we used in the last training exercise? The ones tied together?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

For sure. What do you have in mind?

GRADY O.S.

Well, something tells me the front gate of that castle won't be unlocked.

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. FRONT GATE. NIGHT.

Grady sneaks up to the wall of the castle. Above him in the sky, the gingerbread dragon swoops down and roars randomly.

GRADY

Prancer!

The Red Adventure motorcycle turns into a purple cube and flies to Grady's hand again. He tucks it away in a pocket.

GRADY

(whispering)

Ok. Do you have it ready?

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly nearly spills his drink in excitement.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Sweet Frosted Yule Log! Is that a fudging  
Gingerbread dragon?

GRADY O.S.

Yup. Stop geeking out. Do you have it ready?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

You bet. Anytime.

(to himself, just mouthing the words)  
Gingerbread dragon!

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. FRONT GATE. NIGHT.

Grady reaches into his Santa sack and pulls out two wreath  
transportals hoops connected by a rope. He throws one of them up  
the castle wall and immediately jumps in the second one.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Grady pops out of one transportal.

GRADY

(to himself)

Man this is stupid.

He jumps in the second portal.

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

Grady pops out of the portal and just barely manages to grab the  
top of the outside of the wall with one hand. With the other he  
tries to grab the wreath transportal hoop he just came out of  
but fumbles and it falls. He quickly uses that hand to grab the  
top of the wall to solidify himself.

He looks down and winces as the wreath transportal hoop hits the  
ground way below him.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

No worries. I can make another one.

Grady pulls himself up and rolls onto the top of the crenelated wall. He quickly ducks behind one of the inner crenelations as the dragon swoops by.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly snells bends forward to get a closer look at monitor.

PEPPERJELLY SNELL

Hold the phone. That isn't a gingerbread dragon. It's a ginger snap dragon.

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

GRADY

So?

PEPPERJELLY SNELL O.S.

Ginger Snap? Snap Dragon? Come on man. It's witty. It's fun. It's a super food. It's just super cool.

GRADY

Yeah, well, your super cool, super food is going to super destroy me.

Grady looks between crenelations to see the entire Santa Corps encased in green resin below him.

GRADY

You seeing that?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Yup. I guess we found them.

GRADY

Got any ideas on how we defeat this dragon?

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly Snells puts his hand on his chin, thinking

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Hmmm...

He starts to giggle maniacally.

GRADY O.S.

You got something?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Oh yeah. I was thinking to myself 'How can I get a chunk of that dragon over here so I can eat it?

GRADY O.S.

You want to eat it? That's your solution?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Well, in a manner of speaking. Could you drive that motorcycle around the ramparts? Is that doable?

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

Grady looks around.

GRADY

Ya, probably. Why?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Well, I will face the transportals in the control room together. You get her to chase you, you go through the portals and out the other side. Once her head comes through. I close the portals. Super food for me. We win. Nothing but smooth Christmas morning.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

GRADY O.S.

Let me get this straight. You want me to drive a motorcycle around the top of a castle, while being chased by a dragon and then jump the motorcycle through some tranportals?

Pepperjelly nods vigorously.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Affirmative.

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

Grady shrugs.

GRADY

Santa-bait. I guess it's the best we've got.

He throws the cube on the castle rampart.

GRADY

Dancer!

The cube transforms into the red adventure motorcycle again. Grady mounts it and starts it up.

GRADY

(yelling, to Dragon)

Hey gumdrops! Over here!

The dragon roars and turns mid flight to take after Grady. Grady starts driving along the ramparts as fast as he can. He has to jump over a few obstacles, but keeps the bike going fine. In the corners, he has to skid sideways a bit to navigate the corner properly.

The dragon swoops low and roars, breathing out. It's not dragon fire that comes out though, but something that makes the air shimmer where the dragon fire would have been. Where it touches the castle or anything else, it is turned into candy cane material. Grady barely escapes the blast of candy cane breath.



GRADY  
You seeing that?

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.  
Yeah. Definitely unexpected. I suggest hurrying  
up. Get your transportals ready.

Grady pulls the transportals out of his bag and holds them near  
the handle bars.

GRADY  
Ok, we have to time this right though. Monitor  
it and let me know when she is following close.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Pepperjelly watches the monitor as the dragon pursues Grady on  
the motorcycle. As it swoops low in behind him, he grabs the  
microphone.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS  
Now!

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

Grady throws the portal rings ahead of him. And drives  
through the first one. The dragon swoops low behind him.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

Grady, on the motorcycle exits one portal.

GRADY  
Close it! Now!

Grady enters the second portal. The dragons snout comes  
through the second portal as Pepperjelly presses buttons on his  
control station. The transportals close and the head of the  
dragon gets severed. Chunks of gingersnap and Christmas candy  
get strewn about the room. Pepperjelly grabs a chunk of

gingersnap that slides across his control station and takes a bite out of it.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Jackpot!

EXT. KRAMMURUNG CASTLE. CASTLE WALL. NIGHT.

Grady exits the second transportal on his motorcycle, but it comes out crooked and his bike slides on its side. Grady is thrown from the bike and skids to a halt in front of a tall figure in a dark suit and a blue tie: Matthias.

MATTHIAS/GROONTA

Impressive. Quite a show. You couldn't have expected me to leave the castle without a way to notify me if anyone were to attempt a rescue, right? I knew the moment you got here.

Grady raises his spell loop towards Matthias and then stands. Matthias raises his greedle spell loop towards Grady as well.

MATTHAIS/GROONTA

Don't be stupid, boy. You cannot possibly win against me in a straight up spell fight. I have more knowledge, more experience, and quite frankly, more magical skill.

GRADY

I can't allow you to do this, Matthias.

MATTHAIS/GROONTA

Come on boy, just stand down. Come work for me instead.

Grady lowers his spell loop for a second.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS O.S.

Don't do it, Grady.

A black/blue bolt shoots out from off screen and knocks Grady to the ground. Another greedle walks over. It's the greedle that originally tried to recruit Grady in the limo.

GREEDLE

I am sorry, Groonta. I just knew he was never going to join us.

MATTHIAS/GROONTA

No, that's fine. It's fine.

(to Grady's body on the ground)

See what happens when you choose the losing team?

A beam of fire shoots from the Greedle and knocks Matthias down. The visage of the Greedle fades out of existence revealing that it was Grady all along. The image of the body of Grady just fades out of existence.

GRADY

I'm not sure it's the losing team, but it is the better team.

Matthias is beaten and incapacitated on the ground.

MATTHIAS

(weakly)

How....

GRADY

Illusion. It was the first magic you showed me.

Grady bends down and takes Matthias's spell loop. He uses his own spell loop to shoot out thick garland of green and red to tie up Matthias.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. DAY.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

Yes!

He spins around in his chair.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Winning

- a) Grady unfreezing Santa's from the green resin. He frees Lori and grabs her hand, pulling her up to standing.
- b) Bergmann rescuing the elves from the cave. She uses her magic to blow a hole in the cave entrance. A few greedless lay unconscious around her. She wipes rock dust from her brow as the elves run out.
- c) Elves swarming into the control centre. Pepperjelly shaking hands with them as they enter, smiling. But also, he is cleaning up his control station prepping to leave.
- d) Grady and the other Santa's entering the control centre through a transportal. One of them is carrying a squirming Matthais.
- e) Grady high fiving Pepperjelly.
- f) Grady and Pepperjelly leave the control centre. It is abuzz with action behind them.

INT. SANTA CORPS FACILITY. HALLWAY. DAY.

Grady and Pepperjelly walk down the hall.

Bergmann exits the control centre after them.

BERGMANN

Where do you too think you are going?

Grady and Pepperjelly Snells stop.

BERGMANN

Don't expect me to thank you. There is just no time.

They hang their heads sadly

BERGMANN

There is a Christmas to save. And I am down a Santa with Matthias defecting. So what do you say?

Grady and Pepperjelly turn.

GRADY

What?

Bergmann sighs.

BERGMANN

Don't make me change my mind. I shouldn't need  
to beg my best Santa team.

Pepperjelly and Grady look at each other and back at Bergmann.  
They start swiftly walking back towards her and the control  
centre.

GRADY

No. No need to beg. We are good here.

PEPPERJELLY SNELLS

I mean one thing. 'Best' is a good word, but  
I liked when you used 'brilliant' before.

Bergmann raises an eyebrow.

BERGMANN

Let's get to work then!

Grady and Pepperjelly run back into the control centre.

INT. SANTA CORP FACILITY. CONTROL CENTRE. CHRISTMAS EVE. NIGHT.

Pepperjelly sits at an open station. Grady stands beside him  
garbed in a fresh Santa suit.

Pepperjelly presses a few buttons on his station and a  
transportal spins to life in front of Grady. He gives Grady the  
thumbs up.

GRADY

Here we go! Smooth Christmas Morning!

He steps through the portal.

INT. PROMOTIONAL VIDEO. DAY

There is a background of green with symbols of a Santa hat in  
the middle flanked by two Christmas tree symbols.

SUPER: FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY. SANTA CORPS RECRUITMENT

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Grady Boots is in a Santa outfit delivering presents under a tree.

NARRATOR V.O.

Are you a born giver?

EXT. ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

Lori is in her Santa suit running across rooftops with a Santa sack in tow.

NARRATOR V.O.

Are you swift on your feet?

EXT. YARD. NIGHT

Bergmann uses her spell loop to add garland to a tree in the yard.

NARRATOR V.O.

Can you channel magical energy?

INT. SANTA CORPS TRAINING GYMNASIUM. DAY

Recruits train in the facility. Merryweather shouts at them encouragingly.

NARRATOR V.O.

Then maybe the Santa Corps is right for you!

EXT. ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

A Santa with the holo-sant on uses his spell loop to get thin and go down the chimney.

NARRATOR V.O.

You could be a Santa!

INT. SANTA CORPS GADGET LAB. HEAD GADGET MASTERS OFFICE. DAY

Santiago sits behind the desk as head gadget master, tinkering with a new gadget. There is smoke and sparkles as he turns it on.

NARRATOR V.O.

Or a gadget master!

INT. SANTA CORPS NAUGHTY LIST OFFICE. DAY

Clifton reviews a naughty list, making notes at his desk.

NARRATOR V.O.

Or work in the naughty list department!

INT. PROMOTIONAL VIDEO. DAY

There is a background of green with symbols of a Santa hat in the middle flanked by two Christmas tree symbols.

SUPER: Join Up Today!

NARRATOR V.O.

Join up today!